

11 APRIL 2015

# NME

## Kendrick Lamar

FROM 'GOOD KID' TO  
GLOBAL PHENOMENON

## Blur

MORE NEW ALBUM  
SECRETS REVEALED

## Public Enemy

THE LEGACY OF 'FEAR  
OF A BLACK PLANET'

# "Kurt died of a broken heart"

HOW LOVE, SHAME AND COURTNEY  
FUELLED THE NEW COBAIN FILM



+

Charli XCX

Noel Gallagher

The Vaccines

Hudson Mohawke

"Where are the exorcists when you need them to calm the beast within?" JOEY RAMONE

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and more

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Noel Gallagher

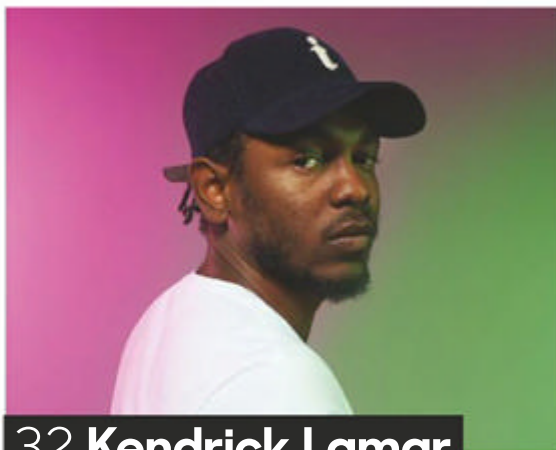
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## LETTER OF THE WEEK

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## BEAT THE CREEPS

When you go to a gig, you mentally sign an unwritten contract that says you're likely to get crushed, unfathomably sweaty and ripped off at the bar. One thing, however, that is neither expected nor welcome, yet seems omnipresent for women at gigs, is borderline molestation coming from unknown hands. My girlfriend and I have been to six gigs together this month with no problem, but when she went to one recently with her female friends she was treated like a piece of meat by not just one or two perverted pieces of shit, but a whole group of them. And, I quote, they were "covering all angles, we couldn't escape". This vile act of sexual assault by grabbing the privates of girls without consent in a dark, crowded room is the work of some seriously twisted predators and it ruins the gig experience for the victimised girls. These bastards with their sly, wandering hands need to be clamped down on and removed from gigs. But how is this possible? Alerting security is an option, but not a good one, for where's the proof? Predators searching for prey need to be extinguished from the gig circuit effectively and urgently. **Anon, via email**

**MB: It's not 1974 – this sort of behavior must stop.** Various musicians (including Crystal Castles' Alice Glass, pictured, and Australian rapper Iggy Azalea) have kicked up a stink about being molested by the crowd. You should, too. And so should the venue you were in.



Let me introduce you to the Good Night Out campaign (that's their logo above), who are busy visiting clubs and venues in the UK, Ireland and internationally to try and stamp out harassment. The more venues that sign up to the campaign and put their pledge posters up on the wall, the less chance there is of this continuing to happen. Point them towards [goodnightoutcampaign.org](http://goodnightoutcampaign.org). In the meantime, if you ever find a hand clamped to a bit of you that your doctor needs a chaperone to examine, grab it, hoik it high in the air and shout very clearly: "THIS SCUMBAG IS ASSAULTING ME". Don't worry about them fighting back; these are cowardly, pathetic worms and you'll have the entire moshpit, security staff and band behind you.

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**MB: No reflection on Kendrick's album, John, but when I recently visited the funk doctor, suffering from heavy blood loss after a major traffic accident, and his 'treatment' consisted of playing me 'Lovesexy' on repeat for three hours, I lost a leg.**

## INSANE IN THE ZAYNE

Thank Christ the five-headed hell-beast that is One Direction is finally choking its last breath. Can we please have a year or two without some vacuous X Factor boyband shite clogging up the airwaves, and can all these self-harming eight-year-olds please Get. A. Grip. **Kev McFarlane, via email**

**MB: Oh that's what all this #cutforzayne stuff is about. I did think, y'know, he's a great radio DJ, and I loved him pretending to be mates with Rival Sons on the brown sofa and that, but you wouldn't risk hepatitis because he's taken the Apple dollar...**

## NO-EL

Imagine a world where Noel Gallagher ceased to exist: a Garden of Eden; a paradise! I blame him solely for the world's problems – Ebola and the Islamic State were by-products of his mediocre, middle-aged music and 'banter'. Recently it has come to my attention that NME sees fit to email me daily with updates about this musical relic. I liked Oasis; they were OK, granted. Being only 18, I was not part of that generation, the one that everyone still bangs on about. The generation that changed lives? No bands like that any more? There is plenty of better new music knocking about, but people in their mid-twenties are blinded by Noel Gallagher's huge head. Nearly 21 years on from 'Definitely Maybe' and Oasis' legacy will

always be bad haircuts. Everything has its time and Noel Gallagher has had his, but he will keep milking this cash cow because it'll make him money, and he needs to make money to fund his narcissistic habits. He probably has a selfie stick at home. What I do disagree with is his constant and triumphant portrayal in NME. I don't mind reading about Ed Sheeran being slagged off, or anyone else for that matter, but it's not really important, is it? I urge you to include a weekly piece on it (somewhere



hidden in the back near all the merchandise and sex numbers), but don't splash it everywhere like it's important. NME is an institution and I read it and I enjoy it. I'm just getting a little bit nauseated by the constantly replenishing stream of shit about Noel Gallagher. **William Rotherforth, via email**

**MB: Thing is, Billy boy, whatever you think of his music, everything Noel says is sodding hilarious. Yes, he's undeniably to blame for global warming and Jeremy Clarkson or whatever, but he gives good quote like Kim Kardashian gives bare-arse shots – relentlessly and very well oiled. But don't worry, Noel's campaign cycle will be winding down soon and normal wall-to-wall Arctic Monkeys service will be resumed.**

## MORE LOVE FOR KENDRICK

So I've been listening to the latest Kendrick Lamar record 'To Pimp A Butterfly'. Lyrically, it's incredible, especially on 'The Blacker The Berry' and 'Mortal Man', with the interview-esque cameo from the late Tupac. I'm not normally a fan of rap music, but Kendrick seems to be bringing classic rap back, which is brilliant. Rap seems to be making its mark again on the UK, with Kanye West headlining Glasto, too. **Sam Chaplin, Essex**

Is there any human with blood actively running through their veins that doesn't see Kendrick Lamar's new epic as the best album of the month? Could any wretched soul deny the healing power of funk? **John Darwin Barbee, via email**



## LOOK WHO'S STALKING

After waiting around for an hour after The Crib's show at the Leadmill last month, Ross came out to greet us and sign our tickets. A genuine, kind guy. Naturally, the gig was brilliant! **Adam Barton, via email**





# *DRENGE*

U N D E R T O W

‘Sinister and gripping’ 9/10 NME

‘A pivotal moment’ ★★★★★ DIY

‘Thrillingly uncompromising’ ★★★★★ Q

C D / L P / D L    O U T   N O W



## NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Yak  
Smile

"I never said romance was dead", Yak frontman Oli Burslem booms, channelling his inner Nick Cave over a sleazy guitar riff that's positively dripping with darkness. This track, from the London-based trio's forthcoming 'Plastic People' EP, clamps a vice-like grip on the temples and will leave your eyes bloodshot. Explosive and magnetic, it's the kind of song reputations are built on.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

2. Jamie xx  
Gosh

Jamie xx's first full-length album, 'In Colour', due in June on Young Turks, is undoubtedly one of the most exciting releases of 2015. From it, the beatmaker supreme recently unveiled 'Gosh', a killer anthem fuelled by sped-up piston-engine sounds, a catchy vocal sample and a warm build that winds around a serpentine synth and a blaze of breakbeat. It's original, rich and moving. Oh my gosh, indeed.

Lucy Jones, Deputy News Editor, NME.COM

3. The Magic Gang  
Alright

Kristian Smith sounds like he's having a bit of a shitter on 'Alright'. "Party drugs don't do anything/ I don't know why I bother", sighs The Magic Gang's singer on this chugging B-side from the Brighton foursome's debut single 'No Fun'. Mixing Weezer's geeky power-pop and the slack-jawed foppishness of Blur when they had long hair and baggy jumpers, 'Alright' is a lot better than its title suggests, with a killer chorus and a guitar solo to match.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

4. Wolf Alice  
You're A Germ

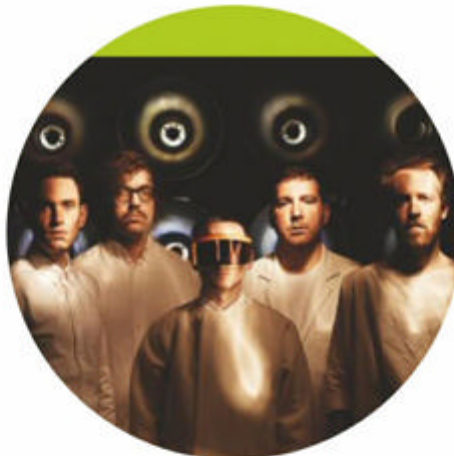
Wolf Alice are more likely to have spent the '90s watching kids' TV channels like Nickelodeon than listening to Alice In Chains, but the decade's grunge influence hangs heavy on this new track, and is impossible to ignore. Culminating with frenzied guitars and singer Ellie Rowsell's yelps of "You ain't going to heaven!", it's the most immediate, dangerous song we've heard from the four-piece yet.

Luke Morgan Britton, writer

5. Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes  
Fangs

After leaving Gallows in 2011, Frank Carter formed flash-in-the-pan power-rockers Pure Love before returning to his job as a tattoo artist. But his love of guitars is evidently as strong as his passion for ink, hence the Rattlesnakes have come hissing into life. Debut single 'Fangs' is a caustic but deeply melodic punk smash. The band play a secret show in Frank's east London tattoo parlour next month; go get inked while they kick up their stink.

Leonie Cooper, writer

6. White Reaper  
Make Me Wanna Die

Last year, Louisville quartet White Reaper quietly released their self-titled debut EP. Their debut album follows this year and this is the first track from it. It's just as scrappy and infectious, whirling keys cutting through punchy guitars as frontman Tony Esposito breezily insists "*it doesn't matter to me*". It's at odds with the morbid title, but its carefree spirit is compelling.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

7. SBTRKT  
No Less

In recent weeks, SBTRKT's generosity has been reaching heady heights, with the producer – who collaborated with Vampire Weekend singer Ezra Koenig on last year's 'New Dorp New York' – dropping three new tracks for free on SoundCloud: 'Flaretwo', 'Roulette' and 'No Less'. 'No Less' is the pick of the bunch, full of exotic birdcall and synths that evoke a tropical sunrise. Long may his generosity continue.

Luke Morgan Britton, writer

8. Metz  
Spit You Out

Not the kind of band who spend much time thinking up brilliant album titles, Canadian noise-rock trio Metz will be following their acclaimed 2012 debut 'Metz' with a second album, 'II', out on Sub Pop in May. We've heard the excellent 'Acetate' from the album and now here's 'Spit You Out' – a track that's hookier and more melodic than a typical Metz offering, but equally ferocious. There's a massive drop, too, adding extra drama.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

9. Hot Chip  
Need You Now

Hot Chip – nonchalant survivors of everything from nu-rave to EDM – deserve more credit than they get. 'Need You Now', the second delectable taster from sixth album 'Why Make Sense?', is a bubbling, club-ready cut featuring a sample of Sinnamon's 1983 single 'I Need You Now'. It's another infectious addition to the quintet's canon – which, 15 years into their career, continues to grow into a hard-drive's worth of dance classics.

Greg Cochran, Editor, NME.COM

10. Kid Wave  
Honey

"Some say dreaming is a waste of time/I've got nothing else in my life", sighs Lea Emmery on this latest taster from London-based quartet Kid Wave's eagerly awaited upcoming debut album 'Wonderlust'. It's certainly not hard to believe the Swedish-born singer has her head in the clouds – 'Honey' is a dizzying rush of pastel-hued guitars that carries you off into the band's serene bubble. Magical.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor



# ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

► LISTEN TO THEM ALL AT [NME.COM/ONREPEAT](http://NME.COM/ONREPEAT) NOW

## 11. Rihanna *Bitch Better Have My Money*

Rihanna's not always shy of playing it safe, tossing out Calvin Harris-crafted bangers or soupy pop ballads. But then she'll go and do something as good as this and all is forgiven. It's her vocal that stands out most: normally so powerful, here it's nasty and raspy, all cocksure swagger and fuck-you bravado as she spits, "*Kamikaze if you think you gon' knock me off the top*". She's right, too.

**Ben Hewitt, writer**

## 12. Georgia *Move Systems*

Last year, Georgia Barnes – then styled as G<sup>E</sup>O<sup>R</sup>GIA – pricked ears with her debut EP 'Come In' and drumming stints with Kate Tempest and Kwes. Now she's dropped the attention-seeking typography and is preparing a full-length album. 'Move Systems' builds from a warped music-box intro to a droning call to arms. "*The systems always lie about who we are/So it won't be long*", she threatens sweetly, drawing you to the barricades.

**Matthew Horton, writer**

## 13. King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard *The River (Radio Edit)*

You'll remember King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard – the Melbourne seven-piece with two drummers and a bug-eyed, flute-playing frontman – from last December's UK debut 'I'm In Your Mind Fuzz'. Follow-up 'Quarters' looks like being equally bonkers. Each of its four songs lasts 10 minutes and 10 seconds, and this edit of the LP opener, full of meandering, jazzy riffs, is a tasty appetiser.

**Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor**

## 14. Best Friends *Cold Shapes*

Here are Sheffield punk kids Best Friends, dangling another taster of their upcoming debut album 'Hot. Reckless. Totally Insane'. 'Cold Shapes' rolls in on a doomy bassline that gives way to singer Lewis Sharman's downbeat vocals and guitars that shimmer gently in the shadow of John Squire. Then, when the quartet deploy an explosion of surf-rock riffing and a classic "Oohh, oohh" vocal hook instead of a chorus, this tune really takes off.

**Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor**

## 15. Palma Violets *English Tongue*

The closing track from Palma Violets' imminent second album 'Danger In The Club' is a rabble-raising affair built for drunkenly meeting your new bessshht mayyte in the queue for a pub toilet. Singer Sam Fryer's slurred vocals come on like Pete Doherty fronting The Pogues, while a big, communal chorus is the sound of Friday night kicking-out time. The whole thing is a proper boozy riot.

**Lisa Wright, writer**



## 16. Daphne & Celeste *You And I Alone*

Fifteen years after their last single, the American pop duo return in conjunction with obscure British producer Max Tundra. In 2011, Tundra tweeted the duo to ask if they would let him write and produce a song for them. They accepted, and this glitchy pop song is the result: a disquieting number where it's uncertain whether "*you and I alone*" is an intimate or creepy prospect...

**Laura Snapes, Features Editor**

## 17. Death Grips *I Break Mirrors With My Face In The United States*

"*I don't care about real life*", roars MC Ride on this first track from 'Jenny Death' – the second disc from Death Grips' new double album 'The Powers That B'. This Molotov cocktail of pulverising electronics and 1,000mph drums is every bit as savage as its name suggests, and arriving nine months after the band announced they'd broken up, represents a brutal rebirth.

**Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM**

## 18. Pretty Vicious *It's Always There*

The story goes that when Pretty Vicious signed their major-label deal they were given the very contracts that the Sex Pistols signed nearly 40 years ago as a welcome gift. The Welsh quartet embody the Pistols' anarchic spirit as they rip through three-and-a-half minutes of smalltown anger. At one point, frontman Brad Griffiths barks "*give me everything*" with the swagger of a young man who, pretty soon, won't even have to ask.

**David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor**

## 19. Circa Waves *101*

Circa Waves' debut album 'Young Chasers' might be full of buoyant indie pop, but this B-side to latest single 'T-Shirt Weather' shows a surprise new side to the Liverpool foursome. On '101' they sound like cult Cornish garage-punks The Black Tambourines, a new band based right at the other end of the country. Sixties-ish guitars rumble along as frontman Kieran Shudall pants lyrics that match the song's powerful sense of urgency.

**Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor**

## 20. Radkey *Parade It*

Radkey recorded this new track with producer Ross Orton, who's worked with Arctic Monkeys and helmed Drenge's fierce new record 'Undertow' in his Sheffield studio. 'Parade It' is a similarly meaty hunk of heavy rock, with Isaiah Radke booming "*Your love has really got me down*" over propulsive bass and drums. The Missouri trio have also been working with Orton on their forthcoming debut album, so expect that to be just as bloodthirsty.

**Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor**





# TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

## When Paul met Johnny

**Guitar legends Weller and Marr vow to work together after uniting onstage in London for a Teenage Cancer Trust gig**

PHOTO BY ANDY PARADISE

**T**wo years ago, an unlikely collaboration occurred at the Royal Albert Hall when Noel Gallagher and Damon Albarn put two decades of animosity behind them to perform Blur's 'Tender' for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

On Friday, March 27, guitar legends Paul Weller and Johnny Marr shared the same stage and played together in the UK for the first time. The former Jam and Smiths men teamed up for a cover of Junior Walker & The Allstars' '60s hit '(I'm A) Roadrunner'. Their bluesy take on the Motown hit went down a storm, Marr's guitar licks complementing Weller's gravelly vocals. "I played with [Weller's '80s band] The Style Council hundreds of years ago when we were both children," Marr told *NME* after the performance, "and then again a few years ago in America, but this is the first time we've played together over here."

Their team-up was such a success they're considering hitting the studio together. "We've talked about working together for a long time," said Weller. "We'd love to do it," Marr added. "We'll do a single together at some point, definitely."

Earlier in the evening, Marr performed a rousing set, including a spine-tingling rendition of 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' that saw sections of the crowd filling in on vocal duties, a vitriolic version of Sonny Curtis' 'I Fought The Law' and a smattering of cuts from his own solo albums.

After an early technical setback that saw Weller walk offstage, the Modfather returned to showcase five new songs from his forthcoming album 'Saturn's Pattern' during a two-hour show that saw him backed by long-time touring guitarist Steve Cradock.

Summing up the night, Marr said: "I've never done these Teenage Cancer Trust gigs before, but I feel a certain kind of kinship with the people involved. There's a sort of musical kindred spirit situation going on – guitar music, basically; people with similar ideals." ■ DAMIAN JONES

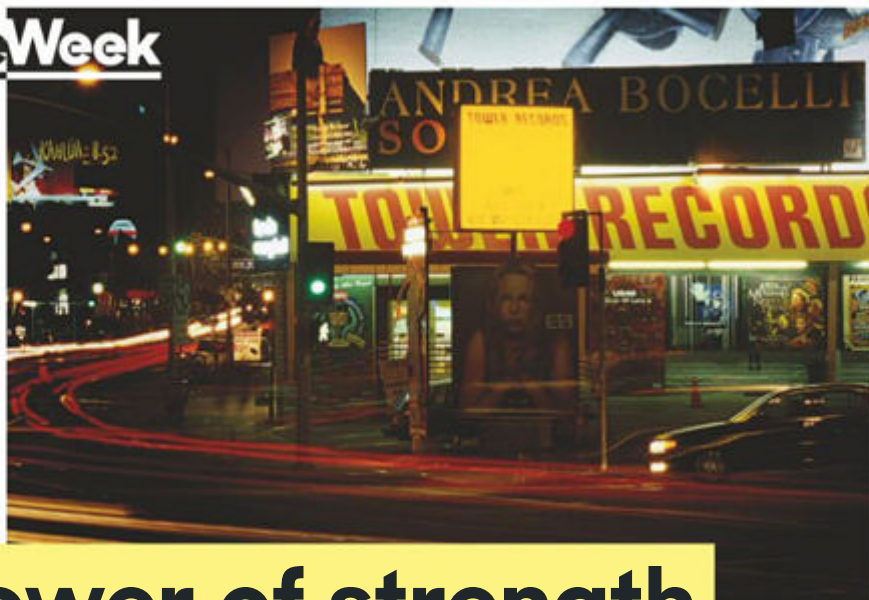




Paul Weller and  
Johnny Marr,  
March 27, 2015







# Tower of strength

**A new doc on the now-defunct Tower Records shows why it was a global chain with soul**

**D**espite making \$1bn in 1999, Tower Records went bankrupt in 2006, thanks in part to rise of the MP3. One of the music retailer's biggest fans was *Fargo* and *Dexter* actor

**Colin Hanks**, son of Tom, who was raised on a steady sonic diet of The Beatles and Paul Simon's 'Graceland'. Two years after the business went under, he decided to commit its fascinating story to film. "I bought a lot of records at Tower when I was a kid," he explains. "I didn't have a sweet tooth, but I liked buying music."

Seven years in the making, *All Things Must Pass* quickly dismisses the idea that Tower Records was just another soulless corporation and paints the company as an innovative and awesome place to work.

"Each one was run like an independent mom-and-pop store, as weird as that might sound," Hanks tells *NME* after the film's first LA screening last month. "Each store had their own art department and their own buyers. There was not a mothership telling the little satellites what to do – it was the satellites telling the mothership, 'OK, here's what we're doing.'"

Founded in 1960 by charismatic entrepreneur Russ Solomon in Hanks' hometown of Sacramento, California, Tower first expanded across the West Coast before going global. *All Things Must*

*Pass* recalls tales of shoppers shagging in listening booths and former clerks pulling all-night shifts in the stock room, high on cocaine.

The chain's impressively deep inventory drew music nerds and artists alike to its racks, and in the 1970s Jimmy Page, Elton John and record-industry bigwig David Geffen could regularly be found browsing in the store on LA's Sunset Strip. "That was what made Tower unique," says Hanks. "It wasn't just Top 40 bullshit and pop music – it was everything."

The assistants behind the counters were often musicians themselves, including a young **Dave Grohl**, who worked in the Washington DC branch and appears in the film alongside fellow Tower devotee Bruce Springsteen. Misty-eyed, *The Boss* brands the shops a "lost boys club" for teenagers with nowhere else to go.

Amusing but emotive, the film prompted a tearful reaction on Twitter after its premiere at SXSW in March. "People walked into the film thinking it's just going to be this by-numbers documentary about this one company and the fall of the music industry, but what we tried to do is show that this is a much more human story," Hanks says. "There were people who started at Tower when they were 19 and thought they'd always work there. When you lose your job at 50, it's hard to get back into the workforce."

The film, funded via Kickstarter, takes its title from George Harrison's 1970 triple album, which was posted on the marquee of the Sacramento shop when it closed. Expect UK showings soon. ■ **LEONIE COOPER**

**"EACH ONE WAS RUN LIKE AN INDEPENDENT MOM-AND-POP STORE"**

**Colin Hanks, director**



## MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

### FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

**Justin Young**

The Vaccines



### BOOK **The Rule** by Jack Colman



"It's an amazing fantasy novel. It's by my best friend from university. When he was 18, he was like, 'Mum, I'm really bored,' and she was like, 'Write a book.' So he did."

### FILM **History Of The Eagles**



"I don't love the Eagles, but it's one of the best music documentaries I've ever watched."

It's just so unbelievable how terrible they are as people, and what money, fame and success does to you."

### DVD BOXSET **Seinfeld**



"Over the course of the last year, I watched every single episode."

It actually didn't take me that long, which is worrying 'cos it's a lot of TV."

### GAME **Fifa**



"I'm not that good, but *Fifa* is the only computer game I play. I play as Man United 'cos I support them. I have one game on my phone – *True Skate*. It's so bad."

### HOME COMFORT **Hoodie**

"When I was a kid I never had a comfort blanket or anything, but since I started flying I always have a hoodie in my bag. I use it as a pillow – it's like my best friend on the road."

► The Vaccines play London Electric Brixton on April 8



# TURBOWOLF TWO HANDS

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- Q MAGAZINE

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**Shaun Ryder is back**  
**– with Black Grape,**  
**Happy Mondays, a TV**  
**show and a new solo album**

## It's great when you're straight

**G**reedy bastard, aren't I?" says Shaun Ryder when asked about the massive list of projects he's working on in 2015. The 52-year-old is juggling plans to tour and record new music with Black Grape and Happy Mondays, there are festival dates for both bands scheduled, and he has a new solo album due – a follow-up to 2003's 'Amateur Night In The Big Top'. He's also shot a documentary in the Amazon. "I'm not supposed to be talking about it, but I've been back in the jungle for another telly programme," he says, referring to his appearance in 2010's *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!* (he came second). "This one was in the Amazon, though, and I was living with tribes."

Asked where he gets his energy from, Ryder – who's been clean for five years now after decades of indulgence – says: "It's the injections. I get a testosterone injection once every three months and it makes me feel like I'm 21 again. I'm serious! I've got no thyroid. I have to take 150 micrograms of a thyroid replacement drug daily and the testosterone injections or I'll drop dead."

He sounds genuinely enthused as he talks about his year ahead, starting with celebrating the 20th anniversary of Black Grape's debut album, 'It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah', at an April 11 charity gig raising money for both a homeless charity and his former bandmate



Shaun, Bez and Kermit today and (above) in 1996

Bez's campaign to become an MP with his anti-fracking We Are The Reality Party.

Ryder formed Black Grape with former Ruthless Rap Assassin Kermit after Happy Mondays collapsed in 1993. Their demise had been such a drugged-up car crash that some didn't

expect Ryder, whose heroin and crack addiction was no secret, to ever return. In fact, their debut album was a triumph – it went to Number One – but their success didn't last. In a depressing re-run of what happened with the Mondays, the drugs and ego conflicts became too much. After two years and a lacklustre second album, they were done.

Ryder says that until recently he had seen little of Kermit, who moved to a village in Wales for seven years to write poetry and "detoxify". "I saw him at a Snoop Dogg concert a while ago, but he was still on the party scene and that isn't for me any more. But then I was told he'd calmed down, so I called him up and he seems to be in a really good place. Rehearsals have been wild, brilliant. First day it was like we had been practising for weeks. We had six songs to do and we went straight through them – no mistakes, nothing."

Bez was the only Monday to join Ryder in Black Grape, but he

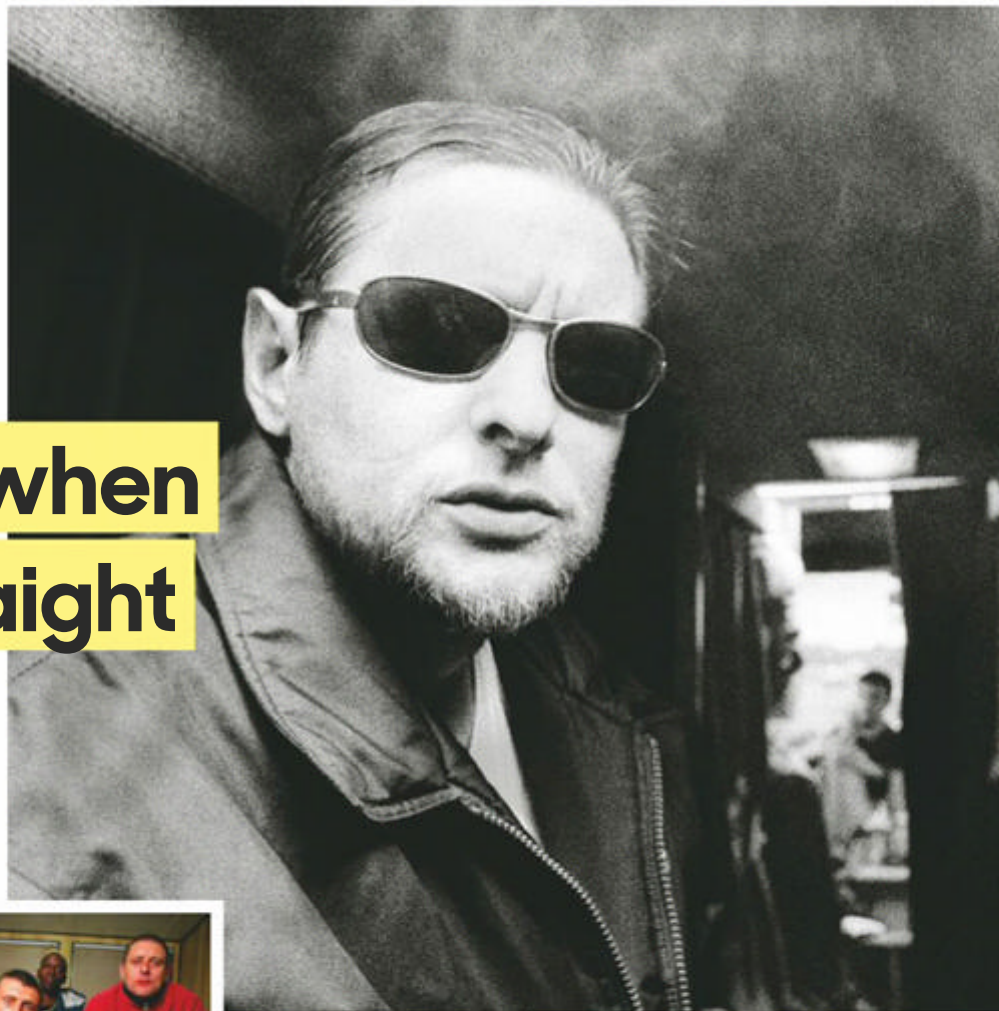
**"I GET A TESTOSTERONE INJECTION EVERY THREE MONTHS. I HAVE TO, OR I'LL DROP DEAD"**

**Shaun Ryder**

won't be rejoining the band. "He'll come onstage at the first gig and have a wave, but the band is me and Kermit. We've got a tour in May and June and we're going to do all the secondary cities, because we don't want it to interfere with the Mondays' 25th 'Pills 'N Thrills...' anniversary tour at the end of the year."

Ryder adds that he has recorded and agreed a deal for a solo album, produced by Quincy Jones' grandson Sunny Levine, and that the original Mondays line-up are edging towards recording their first album since 1992's 'Yes Please!'. "I'll get a Mondays album out one day," he says. "We've done some recording recently for the first time since we split up and it was relatively easy."

Does Shaun know whether fellow Madchester legends The Stone Roses have made any progress on their comeback album? "I've heard nowt," he says. "But I'm sure they'll do more shows. Oh yeah! Once you've got a taste of money, you want more." ■ JON BENNETT





# Golden Graham

In the build-up to Blur's new album 'The Magic Whip', Graham Coxon explains their "do what you like" recording process

**M**ost of Blur's new album, 'The Magic Whip', was improvised and recorded over the course of a surprise five-day session at Hong Kong's Avon Studios in May

2013. But, as guitarist Graham Coxon explains, the set-up there was considerably less advanced than the band were used to. "We didn't have our

full arsenal in the studio

– I had a Stratocaster

I was playing that had just been built for me, so my guitar sounds on this album are very, very different.

[Recording engineer]

Steve Sedgwick was mic-ing the drums up pretty well, but we were quite casual about the sound. We purposely put ourselves in quite

a tight corner so we could hear each other; so we could shout over, 'Play this chord,' or 'Play that chord,' or just, 'Do what you like!'

We wanted to work quickly, intensely, with no technological failings holding us up."

More than a year later, after he'd received frontman Damon Albarn's blessing, Coxon

returned to the long-dormant project and brought longtime Blur producer Stephen Street on board to sift through what they'd recorded in Hong Kong. "Half of the jams were about 30 minutes long and went

through all these different phases, like a jam would," he explains. "I brought Steve in because I knew he would meticulously go through all that and get rid of whatever wasn't useful, and we structured the songs out of what we had left."

The next step involved the guitarist tying up loose ends by writing bridges and middle-eights "where the song would definitely need to go somewhere else". One example of this is opening track 'Lonesome Street', which was revealed in March, and features a "Syd Barrett-y" section written and sung by Coxon himself. "There were lots of tricks for keeping it interesting and for building dynamics," he says. "So we

changed it quite a lot, but the main sounds that are bubbling all the way through it is us in Hong Kong – we've just enhanced it a little bit." ■ BARRY NICOLSON



**"WE WANTED TO WORK QUICKLY AND INTENSELY, NO HOLD-UPS"**



Graham in the studio in Hong Kong

## THE MINI INTERVIEW



**Tim Burgess**

**Charlatans frontman**

**What revelations have you been holding back for your second book, *Tim Book Two*?**

"It's not a revelatory kind of book. It's mostly a state-of-the-nation book about record shops combined with a road trip. I'm travelling round record shops trying to find records that people have recommended to me."

**Who's in it?**

"It starts with [The KLF's] Bill Drummond, who recommended a Van Der Graaf Generator record – they're a band I'd never heard of, but apparently everyone used to love them back in the day. 'Everyone', I presumed, would be Julian Cope and Ian McCulloch. I got talking to [Joy Division/New Order's] Stephen Morris about it and he said that he used to love Van Der Graaf Generator too – then he recommended a Hawkwind record. So it's a road trip around music. Yeah, it's got elements of stuff that have been done before, but the people who are in it are great. Ian Rankin's involved and his favourite album is 'Unknown Pleasures', which ties in really well with Stephen."

**Having started your own record label and the Tim Peaks diner at festivals, what's the next extension of Brand Tim going to be?**

"Cereal bowls shaped as my bowl haircut."

■ MARK BEAUMONT



# STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Iggy Pop's weekly BBC 6 Music show starts on April 10

## Iggy Pop

### Iggy Confidential

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, April 10, 7pm

After sitting in for Jarvis Cocker during his year-long sabbatical, punk god Iggy Pop joins BBC 6 Music with his own show. The lead Stooge aims to be "a kind of atmospheric bartender", playing "quite a bit of music that's new and stimulating, mixed with very old classics, from the blues and jazz masters of the 1920s through the '50s that are little more moody".

### Moon Duo Marc Riley

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, April 8, 7pm

Moon Duo, aka husband and wife Ripley Johnson (who's also the guitarist in San Francisco psych rockers Wooden Shjips) and Sanae Yamada will pop into Marc Riley's show this week to recreate some of

the highlights from their krautrock-indebted album 'The Shadow Of The Sun'.

### Black Sabbath Classic Albums

►WATCH Sky Arts, April 10, 10.15pm  
Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid' is considered one of heavy metal's most vital and influential releases. The

album celebrates its 35th anniversary in September, and this documentary goes into depth on the writing, recording and subsequent success of the record.

### Later... Live With Jools Holland BBC Two

►WATCH BBC Two, April 14, 10pm

Jools Holland returns this week with his musical carousel of the best artists new and old. Blur preview songs from latest album 'The Magic Whip', Laura Marling shows off her beguiling folk with highlights from 'Short

Movie', and The Vaccines air 'Dream Lover' and more tracks from the imminent 'English Graffiti'.

### Biffy Clyro Isle Of Wight 2014

►WATCH Sky Arts, April 13, 2pm

Isle Of Wight Festival have just announced Blur as their final headliner for this year's bash (the other three being Fleetwood

Mac, The Black Keys and The Prodigy).

Get in the mood with a recap of last year's event, including a bill-topping set from Biffy Clyro (left).



## GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



### Superfood

Yak and Black Honey join the Brummie band for their biggest shows to date.

►DATES Birmingham The Rainbow (April 8), London Heaven (9)

►TICKETS Birmingham £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; London sold out

### Circa Waves

The Liverpool quartet tour debut album 'Young Chasers', with Gengahr and Rat Boy in support.

►DATES Newcastle Riverside (April 8), London The Garage (9), Sheffield Leadmill (10), Liverpool O2 Academy (11), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (13), Birmingham The Institute (14)

►TICKETS £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

## 5 TO SEE FOR FREE

### 1. East India Youth

Rough Trade, Nottingham  
►April 8, 7pm

### 2. Nadine Shah

Rise, Bristol  
►April 8, 7pm

### 3. Lyger

The Stillery, London  
►April 9, 8pm

### 4. A Place To Bury Strangers

Rough Trade East, London  
►April 10, 6.30pm

### 5. Tigercub

The Old Blue Last, London  
►April 11, 8pm

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*Game Of Thrones'*  
Daenerys 'Natalie  
Bennett' Targaryen.  
(Right) Nigel 'Balon  
Greyjoy' Farage



# GAME OF THRONES TELLS YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT POLITICS

BY BEN  
HEWITT

The epic HBO  
series returns this  
week: watch it if  
you want to get  
a grip on the May 7  
general election



There's only one thing more tedious than the endless back-and-forth leading up to this year's televised general election debates, and that's actually watching them. Because when does *anyone* involved ever say something truly meaningful? There'll be the same old jokes and tired little digs, the blind towing of party lines, the sense that this will always be a game played by privileged people with little idea of how the vast majority live. Having this lot discuss the big issues via a popular medium should be a great way of enabling everyone to engage with politics. In truth, it's just smoke and mirrors. I beseech you, then, to engage in a different way. Watch *Game Of Thrones*, back for its fifth series on April 12, instead, because – despite the dragons, ice-zombies,

sorcerers, brutal murders and shagging – it tells you everything you need to know about politics. The rich have all the power and influence. You can never be in charge unless you have the right family name. Scandal lurks around every corner, and can weaken anyone's claim to govern. A select few squabble among themselves to rule the land: the righteous but dour Stannis Baratheon (Ed Miliband, obviously); the snobbishly cruel and pompous Lannisters (David Cameron and George Osborne); the nasty, xenophobic Balon Greyjoy, who doesn't want to be mates with anyone who's not from his neck of the woods (greetings, Nigel Farage). There's never a sense that any of these candidates have been put forward because they're popular, or have good ideas, or they'd actually be good at being in charge: it's because they have the right background, and nothing else.

Anyone born less lucky, meanwhile, is fucked. They'll be condescended to by their superiors, and remain unbothered by all the politicking and power play because they'll continue to be downtrodden regardless of who wins. The land of Westeros, ultimately, isn't so different from the UK. The dynamics of control and influence are eerily similar; there are dragons, both here and there.

TV snobs look down their noses at *Game Of Thrones* because, just as music snobs dismiss pop music as trivial or fluffy, sci-fi and fantasy are considered silly and far-fetched. It's a baffling attitude. The critically lauded *Mad Men*, for example, is equally reliant on escapism – the chances of you working at an ad agency on Madison Avenue in 1967 are the same as you having to fend off the undead with an ancient weapon known as Dragonglass. The truth is, both shows transcend their premise. *Mad Men* is about change, revolution and shifts in attitude towards gender and equality. Likewise, the dungeons-and-dragons bits of *Game Of Thrones* are just the backdrop to a very relevant story of power, corruption and broken systems. Ignore anyone who says it's just a fantasy romp. You'll glean just as much insight into what's really going on in our own political system by watching it as you would from a thousand dreary debates. ■

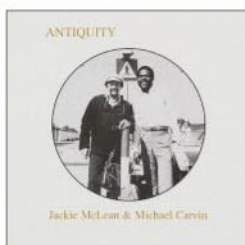
► For more opinion and debate, head to [NME.COM/blogs](http://NME.COM/blogs)

## LOST ALBUMS

#68

### Jackie McLean and Michael Carvin *Antiquity* (1974)

Chosen by Jamie xx



"It's a jazz album from the early '70s that's quite innovative – it has rhythms that could still be played out now in the dance clubs. I heard Four Tet play it in a DJ set and I was just amazed – and amazed that more people hadn't heard of it. I don't know that much about it and I think it's pretty under-the-radar, which is cool. There's a lot of percussion and space in it and there's a lot of weird African chanting, and some great heavy drum riffs that sound like they could be sampled in UK garage. It's just a really exciting record. My favourite track is 'De I Comahlee Ah', but I'm not even really sure how to pronounce it."

#### ► THE DETAILS

- RELEASE DATE 1975
- LABEL Steeplechase
- BEST TRACKS De I Comahlee Ah, Antiquity
- WHERE TO FIND IT Track down the original vinyl or the 1994 CD re-release online or in second-hand record shops
- LISTEN ONLINE On Spotify



Inspired by his work on  
'Yeezus', the TNGHT  
man's diverse second  
solo album features  
guest vocalists galore

# Hudson Mohawke

HudMo working  
on the album  
with singer  
Miguel (below)  
at Health Farm  
Studios, London

**T**he sound of a cocktail shaker rattles through the swish hotel lobby and up to the private area where Ross Birchard, wearing a beige bomber jacket and gaudy gold chain, is discussing the impetus for recording 'Lantern', his second LP as Hudson Mohawke. "Nobody will write a fucking article about me that doesn't mention Kanye," he mumbles. "So I'm tagged as being a rap producer, and not as a musician/producer in my own right."

Since his full-length debut, 2009's 'Butter', the Glaswegian has tried hard to stay low-key, keeping tight with Scottish dance collectives LuckyMe and Numbers while releasing his own EPs (including last year's 'Chimes') on Warp. But his hip-hop work has elevated his name: he's an in-house producer for Kanye West's GOOD Music stable, with two credits on West's 'Yeezus', and he's worked with Drake and Azealia Banks. But it was TNGHT, his side-project with Canadian producer

Lunice, that really blew his cover. "We were very aware of not making TNGHT bigger than our solo careers," he says. "It was like, we can either put this on hiatus, or we can keep going and make a shit-ton of money doing massive festivals at the expense of our solo careers."

It wasn't just his career at stake: while recording 'Yeezus', HudMo had "a few silly nights out", and on one occasion had to be rushed to hospital and resuscitated. "It was at that point where the TNGHT stuff was blowing up, but I'm also needed in Hawaii tomorrow and we've got a festival in Norway today. It sounds fun, but you can't do that without fucking running yourself into the ground. Which is kind of what I did."

Finally, HudMo set his sights on the solo record he'd been putting off for years. Most of it took shape at his Health Farm Studios in central London, with odd trips to Scotland and old haunts in Amsterdam. Inspired by watching 'Yeezus' take shape, 'Lantern' saw HudMo eschew technical, on-screen fiddling to hone his own exuberant vision. The result is a diverse set of phosphorescent bangers, some consistent with his experimental Warp EPs, others more pop-focused.

"A lot of it was observing how ['Yeezus' producer] Rick Rubin works," he says of the new approach. "Just being in his company and observing the fact

## "I WANTED TO BE MORE LIKE A CONDUCTOR, NOT JUST A RAP PRODUCER"

that he's not playing with keyboards, he's not touching a mouse, not looking at a screen. He's just got his eyes closed, listening. So if I've almost finished something, and I wanna listen to it, the computer screen gets turned

off. I'll go and stand outside the room and listen to it as if it's playing in a club."

He's also opened his studio doors to guest vocalists including Antony Hegarty of Anthony & The Johnsons and R&B singers Miguel and Jhené Aiko. "It's stepping out of being known as a beatmaker or rap producer, and into a traditional producer role," he says. "Although a lot of it's done on the computer, I wanted to be more like a conductor. I don't wanna be known as just a rap producer." He

smiles as the waiter delivers a tall cocktail. "So that's the statement, basically." ■ JAZZ MONROE

### ► THE DETAILS

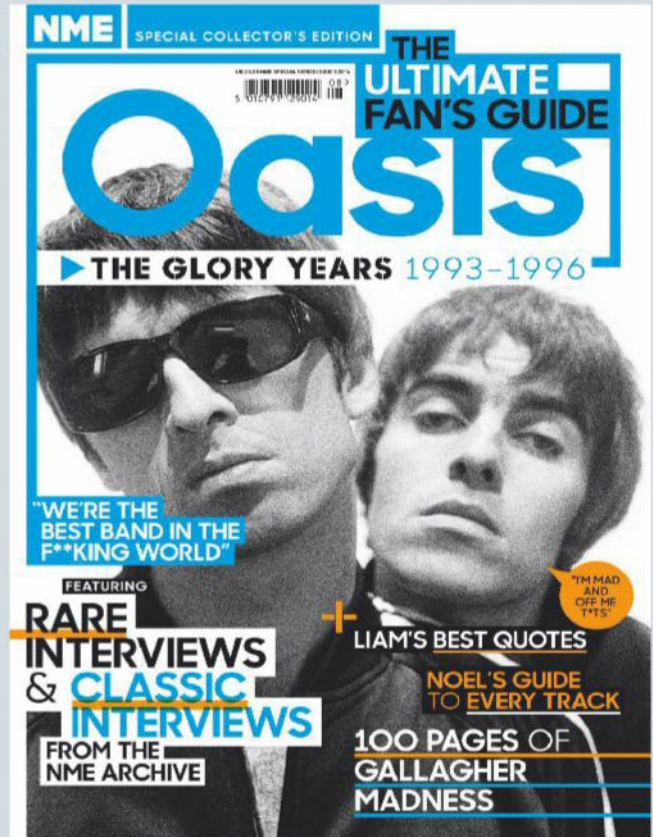
- **TITLE** Lantern
- **RELEASE DATE** June 15
- **LABEL** Warp
- **RECORDED** Health Farm Studios, London
- **TRACKS** Lantern, Very First Breath (feat. Irfane), Ryderz, Warriors (feat. Ruckazoid & Devaeux), Kettles, Scud Books, Indian Steps (feat. Antony), Lil Djembe, Deepspace (feat. Miguel), Shadows, Resistance (feat. Jhené Aiko), Portrait Of Luci, System, Brand New World
- **HUDMO SAYS** "I'm pretty excited. I consulted people whose careers I respect – Mark Ronson, Benji B. They're into it."







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# ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



**"THE MINIMALISM IS STILL THERE... IT'S ALL IN THREES"**  
**JACK WHITE**



THIS WEEK...

## The White Stripes: Get Behind Me Satan

Ten years after it was released, the Detroit duo's fifth album is finally appearing on vinyl for next week's Record Store Day

### THE BACKGROUND

Cannoning into the alternative firmament with their third album 'White Blood Cells' in 2001 and being hailed as bona fide cultural game-changers on the release of 2003's 'Elephant' and its signature single 'Seven Nation Army', "brother and sister" duo The White Stripes had made clattery guitar'n'drums garage blues the de rigueur sound of the decade. For the first album to be recorded in White's own Third Man Studios in Detroit, though, they played down the emphasis on punk-blues and opened up their modus operandi. As well as dropping electric guitar as the main melodic driver on most of the tracks, the pair employed exotic-sounding percussion and adopted a more rhythmic approach.

### ◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Continuing the concept – initiated with 2003's 'Elephant' – of lacing their album artwork with clues and symbolism, the cover shot by photographer Ewen Spencer features both Wild West Preacher Jack and Bordello Owner Meg pointing to the other as the titular Satan while holding totems of Biblical innocence.

### FIVE FACTS

- 1 The album featured the widest array of instrumentation of any White Stripes album yet, with Jack playing piano, mandolin and marimba.
- 2 Taking the title from a line in the New Testament, Jack said the album was dedicated to the idea of truth. Actress Rita Hayworth became an "all-encompassing metaphor" for what the record stood for as she'd changed her name from Margarita Carmen Cansino to hide her Latin heritage.
- 3 Jack was inspired to write about Hayworth when he saw a piece of paper she'd kissed to leave a lipstick imprint and signed with the phrase "My heart is in my mouth".
- 4 Besides the 600 promo copies pressed up for journalists, there was no official vinyl release of the LP. The pair had planned to record the entire album live at a studio in New Zealand for the official vinyl version, only to find the studio no longer had the equipment to make it happen.
- 5 In keeping with The White Stripes' philosophy of getting rough

and raw studio takes as quickly as possible, the album was recorded in just two weeks.

### LYRICAL ANALYSIS

**"I blew it/And if I knew what to do then I'd do it" – 'Forever For Her (Is Over For Me)'**

Jack came up with the opening lines of this tale of a collapsing relationship while on the phone to a friend. "I said to myself, 'I blew it,' after I got off the phone. Then I started goofing around: 'I blew it/And if I knew what to do, then I'd do it'. You get three lines and, you know: 'I better go write this down.'"

**"All the chickens get it/And them singing canaries get it/Even strawberries get it!" – 'Instinct Blues'**

Jack can't believe that he's the only creature in the whole of nature that isn't getting laid. Even fruit is getting more action.

**"No-one else could see this apparition/But because of my condition/I fell in love with a little ghost and that was all" – 'Little Ghost'**

The theme of falling for intangible fantasy women runs throughout. 'Take, Take, Take' concerns a tryst with a vision of Rita Hayworth.

### WHAT WE SAID THEN

**"This is a very brave record, but ultimately one**

**which, after many listens, becomes as beguiling and seductive as old Nick himself. In a world of fakers, careerists and time-servers, The White Stripes are the real, strange, artistic deal."**  
Alex Needham, NME, 8/10

### WHAT WE SAY NOW

**It was always going to pale in comparison to 'Elephant', but in retrospect 'Get Behind Me Satan' sounds like a solid expansion of the Stripes' sound, the tropical marimba of 'The Nurse' and 'My Doorbell's' jaunty pianos arriving like a burst of sonic technicolour.**

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I've always centred the band around the number three... The minimalism is still there: vocals, marimba and drums or vocals, grand piano and drums. Or I play piano, Meg plays timpani and she sings. It's all in threes." **Jack White, Rolling Stone, 2005**

### FAMOUS FAN

"Jack White is extraordinary. He's like a three-dimensional chess player. He thinks so far ahead." **Jimmy Page**

### THE AFTERMATH

Greeted with disappointing reviews, 'Get Behind Me Satan' could be seen as the beginning of the end for The White Stripes. They managed only one more album in 2007's 'Icky Thump' before they split in 2011.

### ▶ THE DETAILS

▶RECORDED February 2005 ▶RELEASE DATE June 6, 2005 ▶LENGTH 44:07 ▶PRODUCER Jack White ▶STUDIO Third Man, Detroit ▶HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 3 ▶SALES 1.2 million ▶SINGLES Blue Orchid, My Doorbell, The Denial Twist ▶TRACKLISTING ▶1. Blue Orchid ▶2. The Nurse ▶3. My Doorbell ▶4. Forever For Her (Is Over For Me) ▶5. Little Ghost ▶6. The Denial Twist ▶7. White Moon ▶8. Instinct Blues ▶9. Passive Manipulation ▶10. Take, Take, Take ▶11. As Ugly As I Seem ▶12. Red Rain ▶13. I'm Lonely (But I Ain't That Lonely Yet)



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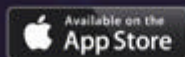
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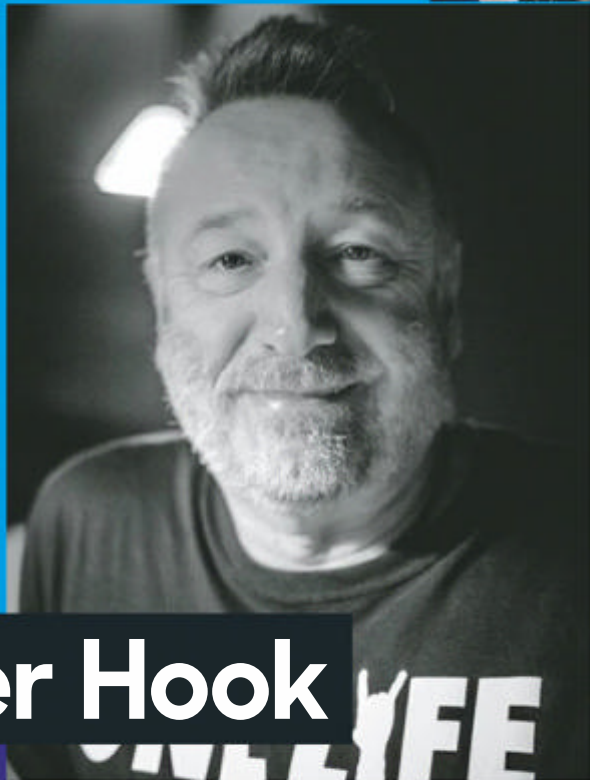
# SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Sex Pistols

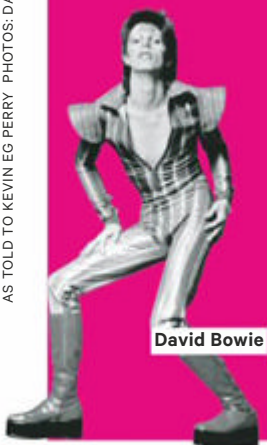


Eminem



## Peter Hook

Former Joy  
Division and  
New Order  
bassist



David Bowie

**THE FIRST SONG I  
REMEMBER HEARING**  
'Sing Something  
Simple' - The Cliff  
Adams Singers

"My mother used to put on Radio 2 all the time and you'd just hear this crappy jazz. In them days the telly used to finish at about 9.30pm, and our radio was stuck to Radio 2."

**THE FIRST SONG I  
FELL IN LOVE WITH**  
'Sebastian' -  
Steve Harley &  
Cockney Rebel

"They played it on Radio Luxembourg when I was 16 and on my first holiday, to Rhyl in Wales. It sounded completely different to other pop music. It made me seek out Cockney Rebel, and through them I got into Roxy Music, Be-Bop Deluxe, John Cale and then punk."

**THE FIRST ALBUM  
I BOUGHT**  
'The New Age Of  
Atlantic' - Various

"This was a label sampler,

and it cost 99p on vinyl. It had people like Led Zeppelin, and The J Geils Band on it. In those days, samplers were big business. The labels would sell them at bargain prices to get you interested in all their bands, and it worked!"

**"I'VE NEVER BEEN  
A BIG FAN OF NEW  
ORDER'S MUSIC"**

**THE SONG THAT  
MADE ME WANT  
TO BE IN A BAND**  
'Did You No Wrong'  
- Sex Pistols

"This was the first song the Sex Pistols played at the Lesser Free Trade Hall [a legendary gig in Manchester] in June 1976. Their delivery of that whole set made me want to be in a band. I was 19 and I'd never played an instrument in my life, unless you count miming

the recorder at school. It was bizarre to walk into that gig a normal person and come out a musician."

**THE SONG I CAN  
NO LONGER  
LISTEN TO**  
'Republic' -  
New Order

"I've never been a big fan of New Order's music. It became a habit to put the music away after we'd done it. As our relationship disintegrated, it made me not want to play the music. We had a terrible time doing 'Republic'. It was so disparate. Everybody's attitude to each other was awful. Now I find it really difficult to listen to, which makes me really sad."

**THE SONG THAT  
MAKES ME WANT  
TO DANCE**  
'Insomnia' -  
Faithless

"As a DJ, there are always a couple of songs that you keep behind to bring you out of the shit. If I play this on a night it'll get me dancing, and if nobody else

**THE SONG I CAN'T  
GET OUT OF  
MY HEAD**  
'Lady Grinning Soul'  
- David Bowie

"It's 'Lady Grinning Soul' off 'Aladdin Sane' that I can't stop singing to myself at the moment. I've had that earworm for a long time."

**THE SONG I WISH  
I'D WRITTEN**  
'Out Of Control'  
- The Chemical  
Brothers &  
Bernard Sumner

"I was intensely jealous of this. I play it when I DJ. The Chemical Brothers actually put a bass on it so that it sounded like me, they told me afterwards. They put my signature on it - just to annoy Barney, I would have thought! Honestly, I think it's one of the best New Order songs that New Order never wrote. One of my favourite Barney songs."

**THE SONG  
THAT REMINDS  
ME OF HOME**  
'My Way' -  
Frank Sinatra

"Whenever my mum was cleaning on a Sunday morning she used to put on Frank Sinatra. I played it at her funeral. Whenever I hear 'My Way' it always reminds me of me being hungover, sat by the fire, and my mum cleaning up around me."

**THE SONG I WANT  
PLAYED AT MY  
FUNERAL**  
'When I'm Gone'  
- Eminem

"I was listening to 'When I'm Gone' earlier today. It's got great lyrics; it's just saying 'When I'm gone, don't mourn for me, I'll be smiling down on you, get on with your life.' Then, straight afterwards, 'Fuck You' by Lily Allen came on. I thought that was a perfect pairing. That's my funeral sorted!"

is then that's the sign to pack up and go home."

**THE SONG I DO  
AT KARAOKE**  
'Penny Arcade' -  
Roy Orbison

"This was my karaoke favourite when I was drinking - it used to delight people when you were bad. People would put on 'Blue Monday' or 'Bizarre Love Triangle' as a gag for me to sing, but I always went to Roy Orbison. God bless him."



# Rad ar

► **LISTEN NOW**  
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► **YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST** ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

**NME**  
**NEW**  
**BAND**  
OF THE WEEK



## Hyena

### Telford four-piece who bonded over grunge and “black sick”

**W**hen you're a grunge band in the sleepy Shropshire town of Telford, devoid of indie clubs and rock bars, you have to make your own fun. The first night that frontman Jacob (Jake) Ball, bassist Josh Taylor, guitarist Dom Farley and drummer Reuben Gwilliam spent together as a four-piece, they overindulged, as teenagers do, on their parents' red wine. “It's become known as ‘the night of the black sick,’” says Jake. “Somebody was sick on my face. That was the grossest moment of my life.”

It's a good job the band members go way, way back. Photographic evidence exists of the four of them, now in their early twenties, at each other's birthday parties as kids. “We've all known each other since we were about three,” says Dom. “Since back when Jake was a fat baby.”

What really bonded them was discovering grunge. “We all got into ‘Nevermind’ when we were 10,” says

Jake. “We were abnormally young to be listening to Nirvana. People at school thought it was so weird. But it wasn't that we were angsty, it's just good music.”

They soon got instruments and formed their first band. They wore out the Telford pub circuit by 14, and played their first UK tour two years later. “We were too young to drink,” recalls Jake, “so it was the lamest tour ever – like, ‘Let's get shitfaced on lemonade.’”

They've already spent a decade together as a band.

“You get the dreadful covers and the awful songs out of the way when you're really young,” Jake says, laughing. “Well, we've probably got a few stinkers in us yet!”

Fortunately there were no stinkers in the set they sent to Royal Blood producer Tom Dalgety. He invited them down to his studio, where they recorded a batch of songs that included their new release, the Pixies-esque, loud-quiet-loud stormer ‘Come Down To Hilo’.

“We wanted a heavy-as-shit song to close gigs with,” explains Jake. “It's a song about wanting to get out of Telford, but we took the title from an old sea shanty. Josh Homme says that rock'n'roll bands are modern-day pirates, and he's right. That's our pirate song.” Just watch out for the black sick. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

▼  
ON  
**NME.COM/**  
**NEWMUSIC**  
**NOW**

► Stream new  
track ‘Come Down  
To Hilo’

### ► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Telford
- **FOR FANS OF** Nirvana, Queens Of The Stone Age, Pixies
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/hyenabandUK
- **BUY IT** The single ‘Mental Home’ is out now on Stiff
- **SEE THEM LIVE** UK tour support for Turbowolf (April 8–22), then London The Social (April 29), Live At Leeds (May 2), Glasgow Broadcast (3), Brighton The Great Escape (15), London The Garage (16), London Camden Rocks (30), Birmingham Rainbow (June 12), Download Festival (14)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** The band gatecrashed this year's NME Awards and stole Kasabian's booze. Serge forgave them, and told Jake he has “cool hair”



**October Glow**

Samples of traditional music from the Far East lend a mysterious aura to Essex producer October Glow's fascinating debut 'Cellar Door'. The track mixes skittish beats with swelling synths as a hypnotic male vocal weaves in and out, creating an atmosphere that sounds both oriental and extra-terrestrial. With flecks of Tom Vek and early Four Tet shining through, it's a radiant introduction.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/octoberglow  
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/octoberglow

**Whyte Horses**

Manchester is not a place you'd initially associate with pastoral, incense'n'paisley psychedelia. Manc newcomers Whyte Horses are doing their bit to change that perception, though, and recent Stereolab-ish psych-pop giveaway 'Astrologie Sidéale' and last year's single 'The Snowfalls' – like The Velvet Underground's 'Sunday Morning' with a flower garland in its hair – are good enough to keep the miserabilists at bay until debut album 'Pop Or Not'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/whytehorsesofficial  
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/whytehorses

**Pure Disgust**

Those who thought hardcore had been petering out lately are sure to find their misconceptions splattered by a tennis-ball-sized gob spat from the mouths of Washington DC's Pure Disgust. The Katorga Works signees deal in only one thing: unbridled rage. Latest track 'Guilty', from their seven-inch 'Chained', reanimates the bones of '80s DC hardcore and fleshes them out with gnarly Misfits attitude. You can smell the perspiration.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/puredisgustdc



Sarah Beth Nelson

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/katorga-works

**NME BUZZ ACT OF THE WEEK**

**Sarah Beth Nelson**

Sarah Beth Nelson's recent album 'Fast Moving Clouds' on Burger Records is a total gem, stuffed full of brooding tunes like the standout 'Paying'. There's an undoubted Mazzy Star influence here, with Nelson's vocals eerily similar to Hope Sandoval's, but crucially it's more homage than rip-off.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/sarahbethnelson  
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/burgerrecords

**Naps**

'Floral Mattress' couldn't be a more fitting title for the latest track from super-lo-fi pop band Naps – it sounds as twee and delicate as anything by The Vaselines while giving the impression that it was recorded from underneath a pile of blankets. With layers of warm fuzz underpinning Katryn Macko's soft and distant vocal, plus some Sonic Youth-like guitar clatter, this modest four-piece from Florida sound



Naps

like something magical.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/napsisaband  
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/napsisaband

**Alimony Hustle**

Formed from the ashes of Empty Pools and featuring former members of The Non-White Stripes, Bristol duo Alimony Hustle join Plaids at the forefront of the UK's proto-emo revival, but singer/guitarist Leah Pritchard and drummer Matt Mndolo undercut the genre's machismo with thoughtful lyrics about emotional violence, eating disorders and their trademark #dowotuwant philosophy. Their closest kin are New Jersey's Cymbals Eat Guitars and Philly's Little Big League, bands who treat heartbreak

with boisterousness, acknowledging the possibility of joy.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/alimonyhustle  
► **HEAR THEM** alimonyhustle.bandcamp.com  
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Bristol WKND Festival (April 4), London Power Lunches (May 7)

**Milk Teeth**

Recalling all that's good about '90s alt-rock, Bristol quartet Milk Teeth deal in scuzzy grunge with hefty hooks. Singer/bassist Becky Blomfield has a good line in Kim Deal-style coos to balance out the squalls, while the playfully dirty bounce of single 'Vitamins' shows the band

**BAND CRUSH**

**Conor Adams**

All Tvvins



**Alarmists**

"They're an Irish band that I saw live recently. They're quite strange, a bit proggy and instrumental. There's loads of mad riffs and timings and really good synths. They're essentially an instrumental rock band, but what they do with it is pretty interesting."

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aren't too in debt to their forefathers to sound fresh. Think The Joy Formidable if they were a bit more fun.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/milkteethpunx  
 ► **HEAR THEM** milkteethpunx.bandcamp.com  
 ► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Tufnell Park Dome (May 6)

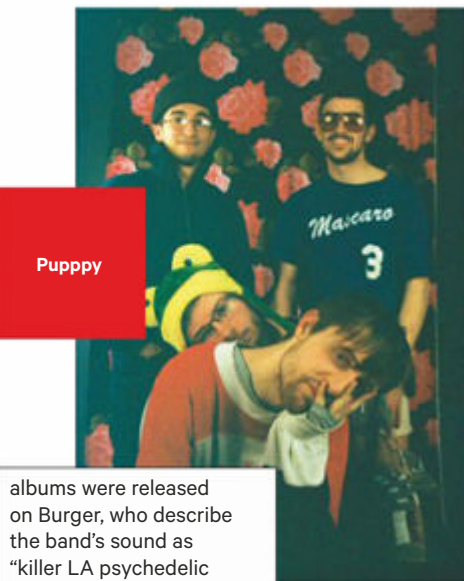
## Puppy

San Francisco indie label Father/Daughter have been killing it with some great releases lately. Puppy's comically named debut album 'Shit In The Apple Pie' – released on April 21 and including the blog-baiting track 'Beans' – isn't going to buck that trend. The influences are obvious: a hybrid of Pixies' locomotive rhythms and Pavement's ear for a good hook, but what they do with them is captivating.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/puppy  
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/fatherdaughter

## Froth

Froth have become well known on the Los Angeles DIY scene since debut album 'Patterns' in 2013, but their recent UK tour in support of new record 'Bleak' marked their first visit to these shores. Both



Puppy

albums were released on Burger, who describe the band's sound as "killer LA psychedelic swirling garage pop". It's a fitting description for noisy, jangling gems like 'Saccharine Sunset' and 'Lost My Mind'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/frothla  
 ► **HEAR THEM** froth.bandcamp.com

## Fufanu

Reykjavik duo Fufanu are adding a darker slant to Iceland's glacial synth oeuvre. A post-punk stalk dominates songs like 'Circus Life' – more Joy Division than Jónsi – and the band flesh out to a discordant, almost industrial four-piece live. Support slots with Damon Albarn and The Vaccines should tickle both muso and mainstream tastes.



Fufanu



Froth

aplomb, relocating to east London in the process. Fuzzed-out guitars and heady effects lend atmosphere to their droning debut track 'I Don't Know', and it's as intoxicating as the work of their influences.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/ulrikaspacek

## Yes Sunshine

If you miss the glory days of 2007, Yes Sunshine feel your pain. The single 'Because Of You' is pure Strokes jangle, while the hyperactive riffs of 'No No No' aim straight for the indie disco dancefloor. Yes Sunshine could easily follow Circa Waves to the forefront of the new pack of guitar gangs.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/yessunshine  
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/yessunshine

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/fufanumusic  
 ► **HEAR THEM** fufanumusic.com

## Ulrika Spacek

When Ulrika Spacek formed in Berlin last year, their intention was to create music that sounded like Wooden Shjips covering Television. They've now fulfilled that goal with

# Radar NEWS ROUND UP

## GIRLPOOL GO BIG

Following on from their self-titled 2014 EP, LA duo Girlpool are gearing up to release their debut LP 'Before The World Was Big' via Wichita on June 1. The pared-back, lo-fi guitar twangs of Cleo Tucker and Harmony Tividad recently attracted Bill Murray to their SXSW set – not bad company to be in.

## VISIONS 2015 KICKS OFF

East London's best festival of new bands, Visions, is set to return for a third year, taking place on August 8. The first wave of acts have now been announced – including Fat White Family, Hinds (formerly Deers), Girl Band and Toy. Tickets are on sale now.

Dark Willow



Georgia



## DARK WILLOW'S DEBUT

Former Rough Kittens and Drop Out Venus siblings Chris and Iva G Moskovich have released a new album under the name Dark Willow. Titled 'Supercool', the duo describe it as a "stoner junk jazz record". Head to darkwillowmusic.bandcamp.com to hear the music.

## GEORGIA SIGNS

Hotly tipped Londoner Georgia has announced her signing to Domino Recordings. New track 'Move Systems' is online now, with a debut album to follow this summer. Before that, she'll head out on the road, with forthcoming dates including a stint at Brighton's Great Escape festival (May 14–16).

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# Wytches'

## brew

**Brighton 'doom-surf' trio return with a new four-track EP that "doesn't sound anything like us"**

Fresh from bringing their doom-laden riffs to the NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas, Brighton-based three-piece The Wytches have been back in east London's all-analogue Toe Rag Studios, where they made last year's debut album 'Annabel Dream Reader', to record a new four-track EP, out in May or June.

Frontman Kristian Bell says the new EP has seen the most collaborative writing process yet between himself, drummer Gianni Honey and bassist Dan Rumsey. "It's a joint effort," he says. "We did it as a band and brought in everyone's individual ideas. That's what's been different about it from the rest of the music we've put out."

The EP will see the band breaking out of the sonic confines of their album, he adds. "They're quite rough-and-ready songs," he says. "A couple of them are brand new; the other couple are just riffs that I've had for years but which never quite suited our sound. For this EP I just wanted to put out some music that wasn't genre-specific. These are songs which I think don't really sound anything like us."

Last time Bell spoke to *NME*, he described the band's unhappiness at being pigeonholed as 'indie', despite their heavier tastes. Now, he says, the band feel more comfortable in their own skin. "When we first started, we didn't really know what kind of band people were trying to make us into. We would choose songs with choruses and hooks because we thought that was the right thing to do. But we're realising that we're happier being ourselves and just doing what we want to do. I mean, I love writing songs with catchy parts, but we're realising we're more suited to heavier music."

Bell adds that the EP shouldn't be taken as an indication of the direction their second album will take – because the band themselves can't yet say for certain. "I've just been recording demos for it on my own at home," he says. "I've got loads of songs piled up for it, and we're getting close to a certain sound that we think we'll use. It's now

a case of rummaging through all the songs I've written and coming back to them to see if they fit the vision."

As for what that vision might be, Bell won't be drawn on specifics – he's keeping an open mind. "I started to get really down on the acoustic stuff that we were experimenting with, because I was thinking that it wasn't really what we do," he says.

"I've been listening to a lot of Yob, the experimental doom band. They're very melodic and quite conceptual. But I've also been listening to Smooth FM a lot in the car and realising love ballads are the sickest thing – I've rediscovered my love for them, especially Billy Ocean's 'Suddenly'."

All that Bell will say for certain is that The Wytches won't be making 'Annabel Dream Reader' part two: "The first album was recorded a long time before it came out, and since then we've started to change what we want to do. We're just trying to do something that we'd want to listen to now. The first album isn't necessarily the sort of thing we're into any more. It was at the time; now we're experimenting. We're working on something that we haven't really showed anyone yet." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY



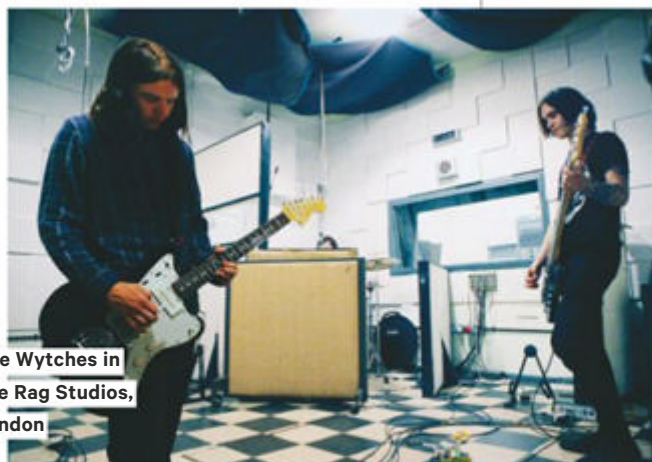
**The Wytches:**  
(l-r) Gianni Honey,  
Kristian Bell and  
Dan Rumsey

### NEED TO KNOW

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thewytches

► **BUY IT** A four-track EP will be released in May/June, with tracks including 'DADFAC#' and 'Wastey Bois'. The second album will follow in late 2015.

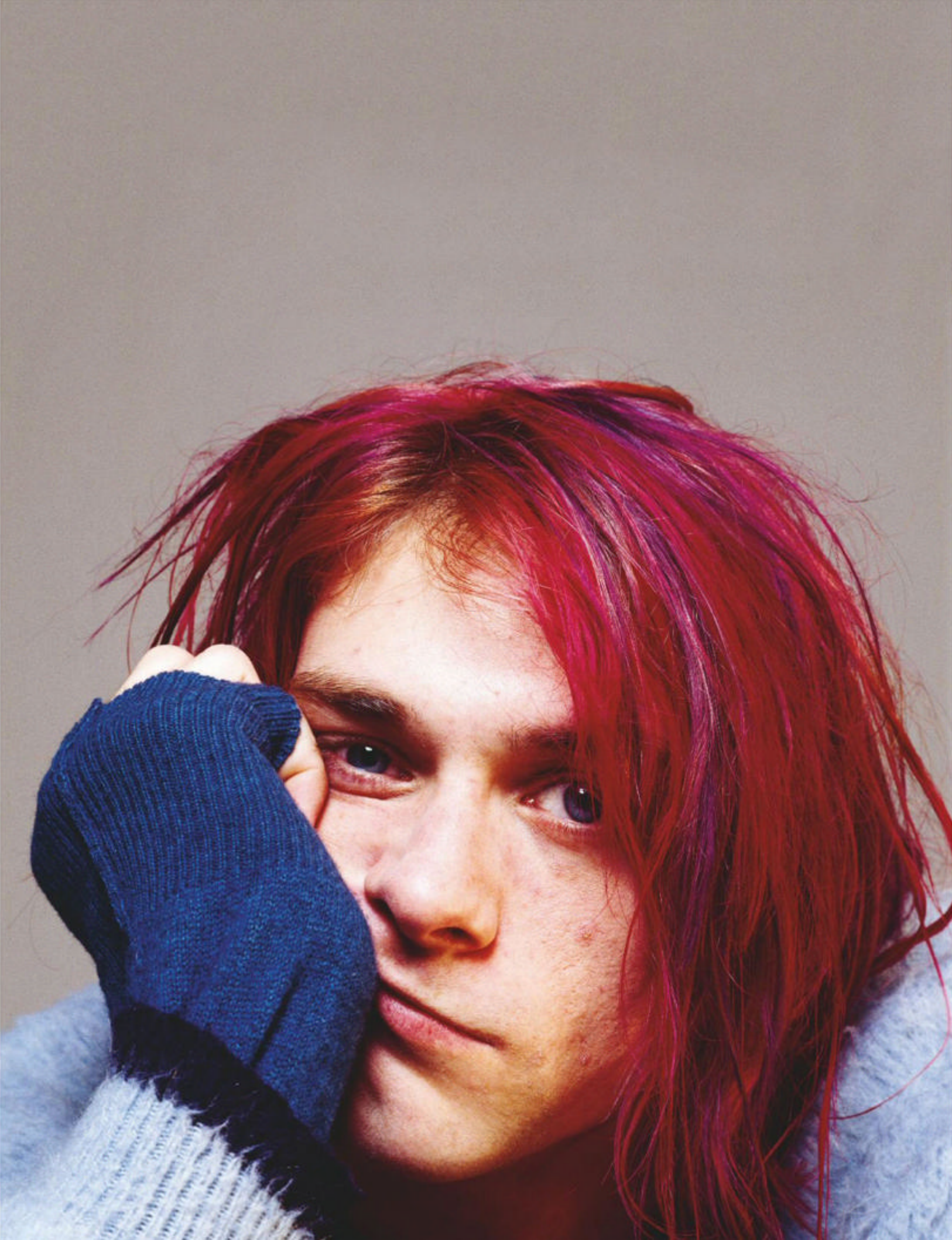
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Ruby Lounge, Manchester (May 22), Trinity Centre, Bristol (23), The Rescue Rooms, Nottingham (24), The Stylus, Leeds (25), Hyde Park, London (with The Strokes) (June 18), Hill Farm, Oxfordshire (July 17)



**The Wytches in**  
Toe Rag Studios,  
London

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# "Based on everything I've witnessed, Kurt's suicide note makes no sense"

27

Given unique access to Kurt Cobain's lifelong archive of diaries, home movies and art, filmmaker Brett Morgen was able to build an intimate picture of the Nirvana singer for his movie *Montage Of Heck*. He tells Tom Howard about the tortured and complex man he discovered and the questions that remain unanswered

PHOTOS: MICHAEL LAVINE/CPI

**F**ebruary 2015. It's just under an hour into the European premiere of *Kurt Cobain: Montage Of Heck* at the Berlin International Film Festival and a packed cinema audience is listening to a bone-chilling version of 'Smells Like Teen Spirit'. The images on screen are familiar – Cobain eyeballing the camera, Krist Novoselic playing bass low and loose, Dave Grohl's hair thrashing up and down as he pounds his drums, the crazed kids in the high school gym – but the sounds accompanying the track's now-legendary video are alien. The trio's mighty crunch has been replaced by a string orchestra and the voices of a Belgian female choir called Scala. The results are ghostly, as if they're soundtracking a death. In the audience, Courtney Love, sitting next to a bearded Michael Stipe, is sobbing. ➔



**Stills from *Montage Of Heck*:  
(clockwise from top left) one  
of Kurt's marionettes, two of  
his diary drawings and an  
animation still**

Director Brett Morgen's treatment of the song, he says the next day from behind giant sunglasses, reflects his experience of watching the video after years spent researching Cobain and seeing something "completely different to what I had seen before". He continues: "Rather than a celebration of punk energy and punk movement, I saw this sort of ritualistic feasting on the band, and saw a whole different story; a story that foreshadowed what would become of Nirvana and Kurt, with them being devoured by fans. And so it becomes horrific."

Horrific moments abound in *Montage Of Heck* – from cartoons Kurt drew of evil-eyed PE teachers, to hearing Cobain's chilling giggle in 1993 in response to *Rolling Stone* journalist David Fricke telling him that calling a song 'I Hate Myself And I Want To Die' is "either being really satirical or going to a really dark place" – but the reimagining of Nirvana's defining hit is pivotal.

It comes in a sequence that features Kurt's mum, Wendy O'Connor, telling a story about hearing 'Nevermind' for the first time, before it came out, and saying to her son: "You better buckle up, because you are *not* ready for this." Her quote injects an air of familiarity to the story unfolding on screen, but Morgen adds his own take. '...Teen Spirit' becomes, he says, "like a horror show. And when you add the choir it's like... horror music."

He adds: "I wasn't consciously trying to not use the recorded version. But when I saw the first cut of the film, I was like, 'This is funny, to not use the song that broke them.' It felt like a very Kurt thing to do."

**Since 2007**, Brett Morgen's life has been "very Kurt". In the spring of that year, just after the release of his documentary about the aftermath of counterculture protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, *Chicago 10*, he got a call from Courtney Love. She'd recently become obsessed with another of his films – 2002's *The Kid Stays In The Picture* about Hollywood producer Robert Evans, which, Morgen says, "she watched daily for about three months".

Love, with the blessing of her and Kurt's daughter Frances Bean, handed Morgen the keys to a storage unit containing all of Kurt's things – 200 hours of audio, 4,000 pages of diaries, plus shoes, clothes, guitars, paintings and his suicide

note – in the hope he'd discover enough material to make a film about him. What Morgen found inside covered Kurt's life, from the first time he picked up a pen to the last. In one of the many boxes, Morgen came across 108 cassettes, one of which was 'Montage Of Heck' – a trippy mixtape featuring the music of The Beatles, Black Flag, Cher and others mashed up with the sounds of Kurt urinating, vomiting and imitating James Brown – that Cobain recorded two versions of at some point before Nirvana's 1989 debut album 'Bleach' and has been available as a bootleg for 15 years. It was such an important portal into Kurt's mind, Morgen named his film after it.



**"You don't have  
to search for the  
reasons Kurt died"**

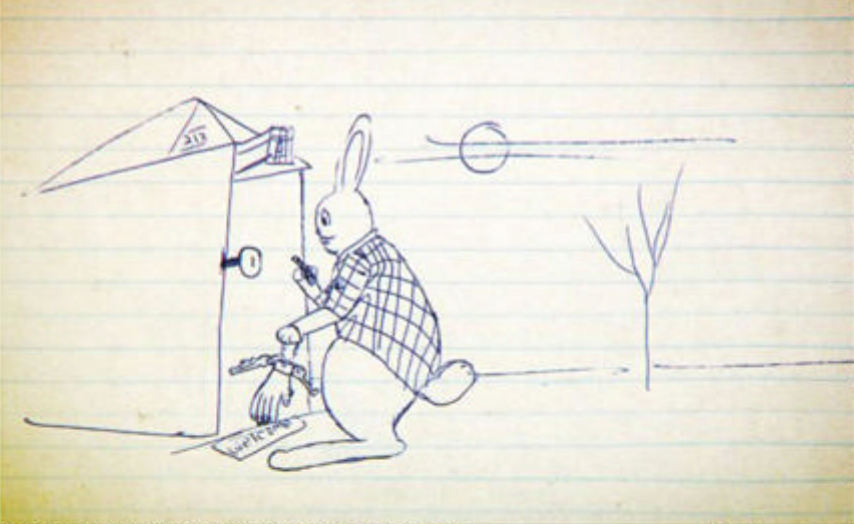
**Brett Morgen**

There was an unmined quarry of unseen material, too: footage of Kurt and Courtney at home, hours of unreleased music, Kurt's teenage voice giving lectures about things like hating school and losing his virginity, phone conversations with friends such as Buzz Osborne from the Melvins about obscure films, and video compilations of twisted imagery.

"Kurt's autobiography is written in his art," Morgen says. "When he's three, you see the idealism, the hope and the promise. The pictures are so sweet. Then, by seven, you start to see the shadow: Fred Flintstone is choking Dino, and the marionettes come in – everybody is on strings. It starts at seven and then in his last ever painting there are the marionettes again. So, to me, it was just following the clues."

A significant clue came when Morgen stumbled across audio that "hadn't been heard by another human being" of Kurt telling a story about the kids at school finding out that he'd had a sexual encounter with a girl they (but not he) thought was a "retard", which concludes: "I couldn't handle the ridicule, so

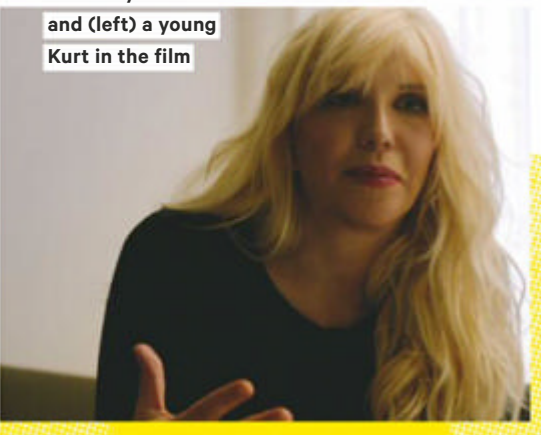




I went down to the train tracks to kill myself." At that point, Morgen developed a theory that Cobain's suicide in 1994 had more complicated origins than a simple hatred of fame. He knew he had a film. "I found his actual suicide letter, which was unexpected," he says. "I just opened up this heart-shaped box and there it was. And I was like, 'Based on everything I've witnessed, this makes no sense.' Kurt didn't have a problem with quitting music; he talked about it openly. If he wanted to stop performing, he would just stop. Nothing was leading up to that suicide letter."

Morgen continues: "Kurt's narrative is as much about acceptance as pursuit of fame."

Courtney Love  
and (left) a young  
Kurt in the film



And it was ultimately about his search for family. He didn't feel like he had a family, but he desperately wanted one. So the second that Nirvana broke he asked Courtney to have a child. You're 25 years old, you're the biggest rock star in the world – having a baby isn't a very common reaction, you know? And you can see in the film that he put all of his eggs in that one basket. And so when that was broken in his mind, there was the sense of failure and humiliation, and all the themes Kurt wrote about in his music and journals and through spoken word his entire life... all connected back to what happened in Rome."

*Montage Of Heck's* big reveal – and this will only be a spoiler if you're yet to read anything about the film – comes towards the end when Courtney Love says, in an interview with Morgen, that Kurt tried to kill himself in Rome on March 3, 1994 because he knew she was "thinking about" cheating on him. Just over a month later, on April 5, he succeeded where he had previously failed.

"Kurt Cobain died of a broken heart," Morgen says with certainty, adding: "It's like Shakespeare in the sense that it's so human. Part of the tragedy is that you don't have to search for the reasons. He thought

his wife cheated on him, and her and Frances were all he had. The film invests a lot in trying to understand why Kurt would react the way he did to betrayal. We try to find the square root of it."

## The extras

What's coming soon to accompany the movie

### The soundtrack

**Brett Morgen:** "We're gonna be putting everything on a soundtrack album around the release of the film. There's probably another 45 minutes of unheard music, but I don't want to put a number quote on it because it could be, y'know, 40 or 60 or whatever. The soundtrack will include the unreleased music from *Montage Of Heck*, as well as other music that both inspired and influenced the film. There's a lot more than you might initially realise. Beyond that you're hearing alternative versions of 'Sappy', which we play at two different tempos in the film. It's all that kind of stuff."

### The book

"It will include transcripts of the interviews I did for the film. I did hours upon hours of them, but I only needed a small sample of what was discussed. I felt that given that the people interviewed were those closest to Kurt in his lifetime, and had rarely been heard from, it would be a wonderful opportunity to present that. And that will be released around the same time as the film. It's like the film in book form. All the artwork, tons of animation, storyboards, character designs, sketches, interviews. It's the companion piece to the film. Given that Kurt is a multimedia artist, of all the mediums a Kurt story should exist in, film is the best, and that's the missing component in the written biographies of Kurt. It's a problem with writing about musicians in general."

**After handing** over the keys to Morgen, Courtney Love's involvement with *Montage Of Heck* was minimal. That was always part of the deal. But Frances Bean Cobain's input was essential for Morgen to make the film he wanted. It was, he says, "decided early on that she would be the person from the family to oversee things". In the eight years that the film's been in production, the pair have become close, and Morgen says the film is "for Frances", as a way of getting to know her dad. She appears in the film only as a baby – she was 19 months old when Kurt died and has no memory of him – but it was the now 22-year-old who was able to persuade Wendy O'Connor, Donald Cobain (Kurt's dad), Jenny Cobain (Kurt's dad's new wife), Kim Cobain (Kurt's sister), Tracy Marauder (Kurt's first girlfriend) and Krist Novoselic (Nirvana bassist and "Kurt's friend", as he's called in the film) to talk about Kurt on camera.

The interviews help contextualise the madness unfolding on the screen. Tracy offers insight into the art Kurt made when they were living together in the late '80s, much of which is shown in the film. Krist offers fundamental snapshots into his friend's feelings about betrayal: "He hated being humiliated, *hated* it. That's when the rage would come out." Wendy and Kim appear delighted at the

opportunity to talk at length about someone they love. Donald, though, is tough to watch. He doesn't say much. But as his wife Jenny



tells stories about Kurt “doing really mean things to the other kids” while living in their house because he “just wanted to be with his mum” he stares straight ahead, eyes glazed, gripping the arm of the sofa as she talks. He seems traumatised.

One glaring omission from the roll call is Dave Grohl, Nirvana’s drummer from 1990 until Kurt’s death. Morgen’s explanation is that “when we arranged the day for an interview, he was unavailable – he was recording his new [Foo Fighters] album – but I was at peace with that because Krist was the one who’d known him the whole journey. This was a movie in which I wanted as few people talking as possible; for it to be as intimate as possible. I didn’t need two members of Nirvana to tell that perspective. Dave found himself available for interview three weeks after we finished, and that’s where things were left. I’m supposed to go back to the editing room next week.”

But a month after Berlin I speak to Morgen again, this time on the phone, and ask if he ever got round to editing Grohl into the film. His response is brusque: “The film we’re going to put out is the film that premiered in Berlin.” Then a publicist jumps in to hurry me along, so perhaps there’s more to Grohl’s absence.

Then again, *Montage Of Heck* is pointedly not a film about Nirvana. It’s a brilliant and sometimes brutal portrait of a talented, troubled and disturbed man. Some of it is voyeuristic, and in parts Kurt comes across badly. Maybe he was a genius, but he was

also a junkie who couldn’t hold his daughter upright for her first haircut because he was so high.

Maybe he was the voice of a generation, but he was selfish and petulant too.

Importantly, the film challenges the idea of Kurt as an ultimate rock icon who’s been perfectly preserved in death. It’s an incredibly humanising film.

“The brilliance of Kurt is the honesty,” says Morgen. “He was a very skilled artist. One of my favourite discoveries was the shattered doll head that he uses in the painting for ‘Incesticide’. Those were models that he actually created, and painted. He really did study and learn and practise. And

for the marionette figures in some of those paintings, he would sculpt these mannequins and paint them. Towards the end, he went up a level. His art also became more serious. As he was battling his addictions towards the end of his life, he returned to the marionette imagery he started with when he was seven or eight, which felt very much like a metaphor for his addiction.”

Just as heartbreaking are the moments when Kurt is obviously happy. As Nirvana take off, they are shot for those famous publicity shots where he’s in a swimming pool and his hair’s slicked back, and he’s grinning so wide his face must hurt. When Frances is born he can’t contain his delight, and in all the footage of him and Courtney horsing around, he seems so relaxed. And yet there’s a horrible sense in the film that although he tried to be happy, he continually struggled.

“The pendulums swung with Kurt, to those extremes,” says Morgen. “I found Kurt at his happiest when he was by himself. All of that audio when he’s at Tracy’s house, he’s happy. You can hear it as he’s doing those funny voices. There were a bunch of recordings where Kurt was trying to do some of his spoken word and was cracking himself up,

**“Although he tried to be happy, he continually struggled”**

**Brett Morgen**

and he was by himself! He’s like, ‘This is so stupid,’ and he’d try and read it again. He’s just... cracking himself up. I’d never heard anything like it. I got this sense that Kurt was at his happiest either alone or with his companion, be it Tracy or Courtney, but with women in particular.”

Central to Morgen’s mission with *Montage Of Heck* was his desire to “shatter several myths” surrounding Kurt, mostly that “Kurt was meek and Courtney dominated him and he was this depressed guy”. He does this using the footage of Kurt and Courtney at home together in 1992, filmed in the period of time before Nirvana’s headline set at Reading Festival where the band cancelled shows because, according to Courtney Love’s interview in the film, Kurt wanted to “stay home, take heroin and paint”. Again, he’s

## From politics to the Stones

The highlights of Brett Morgen’s formidable filmography

### ▶ 1996 OLLIE’S ARMY

Made while Brett Morgen was still a student at NYU, his first film traced the activities of the James Madison University’s Republicans society during the 1994 senatorial campaign by scandal-tainted Iran-Contra mastermind Oliver North. “I’m into employing a lot of slo-mos and hyper-stylisation,” he says, “which is something I started in *Ollie’s Army*.”

### ▶ 2001 SAY IT LOUD: A CELEBRATION OF BLACK MUSIC IN AMERICA

Morgen interviewed a vast array of blues, soul, jazz, gospel, R&B and rap acts, including James Brown, Ray Charles, Chuck D and Snoop Dogg, for this comprehensive VH1 guide to America’s black music heritage.



Kurt in one of his  
and Courtney's home  
movies (far left)  
and as a teenager



takes it from a Nirvana moment to a Kurt moment. It's a primal scream, which relates to the title sequence. There are these idealistic images of suburbia, and this monster underneath that's going to pop at any second."

From then on, Nirvana's music is deployed to help explore themes within the film, rather than chronologically. Softer, unheard versions of 'Sappy' and a cover of The Beatles' 'And I Love Her' appear at appropriate moments, and 'All Apologies' is used, says Morgen, "very deliberately as an instrumental, orchestral toy piano version, during his childhood; and

then, when Frances is born, we bring it back". 'Territorial Pissings' is repeated too, as the film covers Nirvana headlining Reading, by which point, says Morgen, lines like "*just because you're paranoid, don't mean they're not after you*" have become "so much more pertinent, and you realise how biographical it is. You can listen to a song a million times and not really get it. But then when you get the back story leading into it, it sort of transforms itself."

Live versions of 'Breed' and 'Floyd The Barber' obliterate, as they should, but most powerful are 'Scentless Apprentice' and 'Serve The Servants', both used in the latter half of the film as Kurt falls in and out of his black hole. The only musical moment that seems clunky is when Nirvana's cover of US folk standard 'Ain't It A Shame' plays over the closing credits. Given the way that Kurt's life ends, it almost comes across as flippant for the film to end with lyrics like "*Ain't it a shame to go fishin' on a Sunday/When you got Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday/Oh, Thursday, Friday, Saturday/Ain't it a shame*". But, it turns out, the song fits with Morgen's theory about Kurt's problems with betrayal and humiliation.

"I chose it for two reasons," he says. "One: the tempo of the song; I didn't want to go out with something slow, but I didn't want to go out with something so aggressive that it would startle you. It's just a good rock'n'roll burnout. Then lyrically, I love how Kurt twists the lyrics around. And since the film deals with themes of shame and humiliation, the title takes on an ironic meaning. Kurt has taken the song and given it a different meaning by stripping it down to just 'shame'. The last thing you hear is Kurt singing, from his gut: "*shame, shame, shame*". ■

► Turn to page 42 to read the NME review of *Montage Of Heck*



Kurt as  
a toddler

playing with a guitar and a voice recorder, as well as hunched over train tracks waiting to be run over. Kurt's journals are brought to life, and scribbled love letters to Courtney whispering sweet nothings such as "I'll abort Christ for you" dance across the page, before strange montages of seahorses float in and out. Equally disarming is the repeated footage of large, brown, pumping intestines. "He was obsessed with anatomy," says Morgen. "He has a morbid fascination with it. There's a shot in the film where he gets an anatomical kit for Christmas, when he's four. When we first introduce those images of the intestine is where we hear Kurt is becoming disillusioned with this 'ideal family' nuclear unit. They're a metaphor for peeling back the layers and revealing this dark force underneath."

**Crucial to** *Montage Of Heck's* success is the music, which is mixed high and very fucking loud in the film. It opens with 'Territorial Pissings', rendered extra raw by the isolation of Kurt's final screams of "*gotta find a way, a better way, I had better wait*". "That angst is the embodiment of Kurt," says Morgen. "He's holding nothing back, as if it were his last breath, just pouring it out. That

#### ► 2002 THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

An outstanding examination of the work, women, drug busts and suspicious deaths that surrounded Hollywood legend Robert Evans, the producer behind *The Godfather*, *Chinatown*, *The Italian Job* and *Rosemary's Baby*. "This isn't so much a movie about Bob as a movie that is Bob," Morgen said. "We wanted to personify him."

#### ► 2007 CHICAGO 10

Morgen's retelling of the story of protesters indicted for conspiring to incite an anti-Vietnam riot in 1968 and the counterculture's attempts to disrupt their trial made for a celebrated animated doc. Morgen used music by Rage Against The Machine, Eminem and Beastie Boys because "I wanted the music to be the soundtrack of my audience's lives, not their parents'."

#### ► 2012 CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

The NME Award-winning study of the rise of The Rolling Stones thrust Morgen into the documentary mainstream. He said of the production, "It was important that we had to create a covenant with the audience from the beginning; so they would know they were going to see a side of the Stones that they hadn't seen before."









# "It's not about rap any more. Kendrick's the most important artist in music, period"

Is Kendrick Lamar's incendiary 'To Pimp A Butterfly' the soundtrack to a new civil rights movement? Al Horner speaks to the key players involved, decoding an album on which the rapper says he has a "*bone to pick*"

PHOTOS: TOM MEDVEDICH

**K**unta Kinte lived most of his life in shackles: ripped, aged 20, from the Gambian village his family had lived in for generations, thrown bloodied into the grubby belly of a slave ship and taken to the cotton prairies of 1760s America. After four botched attempts to escape the savagery of his white masters, he was faced with a choice: either be punished by castration or have a foot amputated. He chose the latter, and writhed, wide-eyed, against the tree he was tied to as an axe hacked through bone. For decades, other slaves on the plantation spoke of how his screams seemed to hang in the air for months after: as if caught in the trees, pushed around in the wind like a paper bag. Kunta died still in chains in 1822, but →



Kendrick Lamar  
photographed  
in New York,  
November 2014



his story – which became the basis of Alex Haley's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1976 novel *Roots* – has been thrown back into focus recently, this time amid a glorious slink of G-funk bass and simmering rage on 'King Kunta', the standout track on one of the biggest albums of the year.

Kendrick Lamar's 'To Pimp A Butterfly' follows his magnificent, million-selling 2012 major-label debut 'Good Kid, mAAD City', about the rapper's upbringing in gangland Compton, Los Angeles – his experiences and search for spirituality, set to howling siren sounds and huge trap beats. It announced Lamar as more than a rapper: he was a storyteller, a gravel-throated Oliver Twist at the heart of a Dickensian tale about a neglected urban underclass. Some predicted 'To Pimp A Butterfly' would be a straight-up sequel; others imagined a move towards the mainstream – understandably so, given the Isley Brothers-sampling radio-bait jangle of the album's first single, 'i', released last September. Precisely *no-one* expected the dense, ferocious space-soul adventure that finally emerged on March 16: a record that, led by 'King Kunta', with its angsty rasps of "everybody wants to cut the legs off him/ The black man takin' no losses", questions exactly how far America has moved on since Kinte's time. "I wish somebody would look in our neighbourhood knowing that it's a situation, mentally, where it's fucked up," he told *The New York Times* in March. "We're in the last days, man."

A country built on the backs of slaves like Kunta can't ever make good on its promise of a place where all men are born equal, 'To Pimp A Butterfly' seems to seethe, retuning rap to the political ire of Public Enemy at their 'Fear Of A Black Planet' and 'It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back' peak.

**Here are the** bones of the 27-year-old's remarkable rise to rap's upper echelons. Born: 1987. His mother: a crack addict. His father: a reformed gang member who fled his native Chicago in an attempt to leave behind his violent past. The moment he fell in love with hip-hop: seeing Tupac

and Dr Dre shoot the video for 'California Love' – filmed partly in Compton – aged eight. The moment it all could have ended so differently: watching "one of my homeboys get smoked", as Lamar told *Billboard*, in a grocery store car park as a teenager.

"She had seen that we weren't right in the head. That was her being an angel for us," the rapper said recently of the unnamed elderly woman that day who, as a red mist descended and a lust for revenge rose in him, stepped in and asked him to accept God. Now, he doesn't drink, doesn't smoke weed, dates his high-school sweetheart and, ever since his breakout mixtape – 2011's 'Section 80' – packs a peace-seeking message that's prevalent once more on 'To Pimp A Butterfly'.

"He had a vision for his music and its message. He knew exactly what he wanted to say. He knew exactly how he wanted to say it," says Josef Leimberg, who plays brass throughout the record and has a co-writing credit on the stately,

'Amnesiac'-era Radiohead-ish 'How Much A Dollar Cost'. "There are kids in the street with complexes about their skin colour. C'monnnnnn, it's time for that to change. My brother Kendrick, he's here to inspire change – in hip-hop and outside of that. It feels conscious, it feels classic, it's got heart, it's got groove."

"He was so in that space, so focused on getting across what he wanted to get across when I was with him in the studio, it was like watching a Method actor," says Lamar's labelmate, neo-R&B star SZA, who sings on 'u' and 'For Sale' on the album. "He lived every one of those songs to give them that intensity. Where other people in the studio would be giggling and goofing off sometimes – the usual studio shit – Kendrick was focused on making something that mattered. He wanted to say something."

**Since it dropped**, rap fans have been tripping over themselves to unpick exactly what 'To Pimp A Butterfly' is saying. One thing's for certain – it's fiercely political, an album forged in the fury and flames of Ferguson, Missouri, where protests erupted last August after the killing of unarmed black man Michael Brown. The police officer responsible for Brown's killing – just as in the case of Eric Garner, an unarmed Staten Island father of six who was choked to death in broad daylight for allegedly selling untaxed cigarettes – remains unpunished.

One of the few criticisms levelled against the album is that there aren't more moments of explicit anger directed

"Kendrick was focused on making something that mattered"

**SZA, Lamar's labelmate**





elsewhere, 'To Pimp A Butterfly' – the title references Harper Lee's race-drama classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* – is noticeably *not* fixated on retribution, unlike some other hip-hop records that have been released since Brown's death. Another Compton-born MC, The Game – also an apprentice of Dr Dre's – fantasised about taking to the St Louis suburb's streets to "murder all the cops, then the cops will probably stop killing" on October 2014's 'The Purge'. Meanwhile, Run The Jewels' 'Close Your Eyes And Count To Fuck', from their 2014 second album, 'RTJ2', called for "niggas [to] unite and kill the police motherfuckers".

Kendrick instead spends 'To Pimp A Butterfly' exploring the changes he can make within himself to combat racism, rather than raging against the machine. "In order to grow in any way, you have to step outside your comfort zone," says Anna Wise of Boston band Sonnymoon, who provides breathy vocals on mid-album groovers 'These Walls' and 'Institutionalised'. "I think it's great to see someone in his position talking about what's actually going on in the world, instead of bragging about how exclusive their lifestyle is. How can we as artists not be political right now? The world is messed up and we all know it."

**Mats Nileskär** is a cult hero of Swedish radio, having spent 37 years on the airwaves, broadcasting strange, dreamy interviews with big names from the world of rap punctuated by strange splashes of freeform jazz. He was asleep at his Malmö apartment when the call came through that November morning. "I pick up and it's a man from Top Dawg Entertainment, Kendrick's label," he explains. "The guy tells me, 'Oh good, we've been trying to get hold of you for a long time. Let me connect you with Kendrick.'" He'd met the rapper before and interviewed him twice, but had no idea what he wanted. "Kendrick tells me he wants to use

audio from an old interview of mine. He says only that he has an idea for an art piece."

That 'art piece' became one of 'To Pimp A Butterfly's most poignant moments. Tacked onto 'Mortal Man', a track the rapper ventured to Nelson Mandela's Robben Island prison cell to create, Kendrick imposes his voice over Mats' during an interview with Tupac Shakur, appearing to converse from beyond the grave about how "niggas is tired of grabbin' shit out the stores" when police brutality claims another black life, as Pac puts it. "Next time it's a riot there's gonna be, like, uh, bloodshed for real. I don't think America know that. I think America think we was just playing but we ain't playing. It's gonna be murder."

"Kendrick's version puts subtle variations on my original interview," says Mats. "There's a part in mine I'm surprised he didn't use, where Tupac explains something I think taps into a loose theme on 'To Pimp A Butterfly': 'Bill Clinton can pull his dick out in the Oval Office, but when Tupac Shakur does it it's a two-year prison sentence.'"

"It's a wonderful album that I feel so grateful to be involved in, in an indirect way. The way Kendrick changes his voice in his music to create characters in his songs, he's like a virtuoso jazz instrumentalist. The sound on the album is coming from an environment of Los Angeles sounds that the likes of Flying Lotus and Shlohmo have been pioneering for a few years now, but Kendrick takes it to another level. It's an important, important album, sonically and politically. What we've been seeing in America recently is the seeds of a new civil rights movement being sown. I really feel that this album is its soundtrack."

at an American legal system still stacked against people of colour – moments like the incendiary 'The Blacker The Berry', released as a single before the album. "Six in the morn', fire in the street/Burn, baby, burn, that's all I wanna see", the track begins, laying its lyrical echoes of last summer's Ferguson riots over a thunderously grimy Boi-1da beat. "You hate me don't you? You hate my people/Your plan is to terminate my culture/You're fuckin' evil/I want you to recognise that I'm a proud monkey".

On 'King Kunta', Lamar says he has a "bone to pick", but it's with "monkey mouth motherfuckers sittin' in my throne again", and

## 'To Pimp A Butterfly'

### Six key players

The artists who helped shape Kendrick's message

#### Flying Lotus

Warp maestro Stephen Ellison provided "entire folders" of beats for 'To Pimp A Butterfly', but only one was used: on opener 'Wesley's Theory'. His sound helped "provide the vision" for the album, though, says FlyLo.

#### Tupac Shakur

His spirit looms large here, and not just in the 'interview' with the Death Row rapper that closes the album. 'The Blacker The Berry' is pure Tupac fire and brimstone.

#### Sounwave

The LA beatmaker has a grand total of 14 co-writer and production credits, making him Kendrick's closest conspirator here. From scatty bebop skirmish 'For Sale (Interlude)' to the mighty 'King Kunta', his contributions are vital.

#### Thundercat

The Ninja Tune innovator contributes bass and vocals on 13 tracks. If this is your first taste of LA's Stephen Bruner, check out his weird, wonderful album 'Apocalypse'.

#### Pharrell

Having crafted one of the biggest beats on 'Good Kid, mAAD City', the imperious 'Good Kid', the Neptune man's back again, sharing songwriting and production credits on 'Alright'.

#### George Clinton

Another leading voice in the pantheon of musicians who preach black power, Clinton co-wrote opener 'Wesley's Theory', lending vocals. The funk legend's presence feels like a baton being passed.



**Alex Haley's retelling** of Kunta Kinte's story was a big deal, spending 22 weeks at the top of *The New York Times*' best-seller list before *Roots*, the 1977 TV series, became equally successful, both commercially and culturally. Kendrick, on 'To Pimp A Butterfly', brings the fable and its accompanying conversation about black oppression to a new audience. It's perhaps the clearest example yet of the rapper's ambition and confidence, but also of his sense of history.

"It's not even about rap any more: he's the most important artist in music, period," says Anna Wise. "He takes no prisoners – no hypocrite left behind, including himself." The night the album hit the internet, she was on a bike ride around Brooklyn. "Around 1.30am my phone started buzzing out of control, getting notifications of congratulations. I went straight home and listened. And all I could think was... he did it." ■







HEAVEN  
KNOWS  
WE'RE  
MISERABLE  
NOW



37

**Everything Everything's** third album 'Get To Heaven' reflects our bleak times, examining the circumstances that drive individuals to extremes. **Laura Snapes** hears how they channelled fear and anxiety into 'Yeezus'-inspired pop

PHOTOS: JORDAN CURTIS HUGHES



In 2009, political documentarian Adam Curtis released a short film in which he explored the rise of 'oh dear-ism': the concept perpetuated by TV news that the violence in the world is so horrific and confusing that there's nothing we can do but wring our hands apologetically. *Oh Dear-ism II*, a five-minute film broadcast on *Charlie Brooker's Screenwipe* last December, theorised that Russian and British leaders were now taking advantage of this ever-increasing global violence in order to obfuscate their dodgy dealings. Brooker called it the "strange mood of our time, where nothing makes any coherent sense".

Manchester art-pop band Everything Everything's third album, *'Get To Heaven'*, released on June 15, is a product of the conflicting tide of information that defined 2014, which singer Jonathan Higgs calls the "most violent year of our lives". Back in January, Jon told *NME*, "I think you'd have to be blind and deaf to have lived through 2014 and not shed a tear. If you put out a record this year and it's all smiles, then I think you're a liar, basically."

In order to decode this senseless world, on *'Get To Heaven'* Everything Everything push past 'oh dear-ism' to explore the desperation that pushes people towards extremist beliefs in search of their own personal utopia, be it the allure of Isis or Ukip, Putin's fascist cult of personality or 22-year-old Californian Elliot Rodger going on a killing spree as "retribution" because he couldn't find a girlfriend. Although written months ago, the robust chanting of *'Regret'* feels like an empathic portrait of the schoolgirls who fled to Syria: "*First you'll see me on the news, then never again*". On *'Zero Pharaoh'*, Jon tries on absolute power and admits that he too would fail to resist its corrupting influence. They're the perfect band to tackle this disorienting propaganda cycle perpetuated by politicians and terrorists, given that the four-piece's frenetic pop has always thrived on information overload.

"Don't quiz me on the politics of Syria or Ukraine," Jon says, in a cafe in Manchester's Piccadilly Basin in late March. "I don't fucking know, but I know it makes me feel wretched and confused and anxious without having to know who's right and who's wrong. Instead, it's trying to inhabit these people who do this stuff – like how would I feel if I was Muslim, or a rejected Hollywood teen like that Rodger kid. He was the one who did it for me. He was the son of a movie producer and his suicide video was a movie – it was shot like one, with that sunlight across his face, and he was acting, he was completely gone. I felt like a lot of the violence of last year desensitised me, and he represented the end result of that in some way."

He brings up Alan Henning, the British taxi driver-turned-humanitarian aid worker murdered by Isis last October. "When they killed him, I lost it, totally. I just couldn't

believe it. That guy was no ordinary person – he was the dictionary definition of a 'good man'. He had chosen to go out there to help people and they cut his fucking head off. Somewhere between those two lives I felt like the whole world was getting all too much and I felt like a bomb waiting to go off. How can you beat a belief that makes you do those things? How can you fight faith and ideas like that? It's just unknowable."

Empathy and optimism seemed like good places to start. When picking a title for the record, Jon wrote down a list of potential names that were violent, dark and bloody, before realising that metal bands would always out-gore him and that embracing positivity would be a more subversive move. "You go through all this horror, and as this 'fuck you' to the perpetrators, why not give it a really nice title? I wanted to try and rise above it and defeat that horrible shit with hope."

**There's a high** body count across *'Get To Heaven'*: on *'Fortune 500'*, Jon imagines murdering the Queen, while on *'No Reptiles'* he coolly declares "*I'm going to kill a stranger*", adopting the perspective of someone driven to violence through disenfranchisement. But despite the violence, and the abject bleakness of a song like *'The Wheel'*, which examines the appeal of Ukip's ruddy, nicotine-stained face, *'Get To Heaven'* sounds so much brighter than its predecessor. 2013's downcast *'Arc'* was an insular record that often centred on the dismal hopelessness of depression, while *'Get To Heaven'* frequently skews euphoric, rekindling the extroverted

poppiness of their 2010 debut, *'Man Alive'*, and running on nervous, furious energy.

"The feeling you get from *'Arc'* is resignation and a bleak outlook," says Jon. "This time, from the word go, I wanted to make something that makes you get angry and want to do something about it, because that's how I was feeling. I thought, 'You've done all your moping; now it's time to get angry about it.'"

The Manchester-based four-piece went into the studio with a rule of "no calm songs", and with Jon Hopkins' *'Immunity'* and Kanye West's *'Yeezus'* in mind. "'Yeezus' was the best thing I'd heard in a long time," says Jon. "So I tried to write a lot like that. I'm performing a much more confident persona across the record, and that attitude came from *'Yeezus'*, that 'fuck you'."

They took the same approach to the music – parts of *'Arc'* had been written to try and second-guess what audiences wanted from them, and to resist their natural tendency

## "THE WHOLE WORLD WAS TOO MUCH. I FELT LIKE A BOMB WAITING TO GO OFF"

JONATHAN HIGGS

(From left) Jonathan Higgs, Alex Robertshaw, Jeremy Pritchard, Michael Spearman



towards excess. "I think the attitude shift that occurred between the two records was that we just stopped caring about whether we *should* do this or *could* do it live – we just said, 'Bollocks to it, and if it sounds good then we'll do it,'" says Jon.

In an attempt to escape their comfort zone, they opted not to work with their usual producer, David Kosten, instead going with Stuart Price, who had worked on Madonna and New Order's later records. After a year of hard writing, they took an unconventional approach to recording. Stuart lives in LA, and for most of the process the band emailed him their work and he would send back suggested mixes, allowing the band greater independence and making them realise that self-production might be an option in the future. Only in the last nine days did he join them in the studio to help refine the record's bright, jagged edges and strangely moving vocal harmonies.

"We wanted it to be colourful and vibrant and more upbeat than 'Arc'," says drummer Michael Spearman. "We found playing 'Arc' live, as fun as it was... it was hard to make a setlist that felt –"

"Like you'd want to be there," says Jon, darkly.

"There's a lot of positive energy on the record, but it's not necessarily in the lyrics," adds guitarist Alex Robertshaw.

Their rediscovered bright side comes through strongest in lead single 'Distant Past', released this week. It's the biggest banger they've ever written, hooked around a huge synth-rave chorus that Jon came up with in his parents' shed. "We did struggle with it," says bassist Jeremy Pritchard. "Because we thought it would sound cheap and nasty, like a shitty David Guetta thing, but I think it struck the balance." It's about alleviation and a reversion to previous states, he says, echoing the idea of rave culture as a kind of escapist Eden.

"In some ways it'd be great to go back [to the past] and forget all this bollocks, but in others it would be fucking terrifying," says Jon.

"And there's now the added element that there are people in the world that think we should be living in the dark ages," adds Jeremy.

'Distant Past' feels

emblematic of 'Get To Heaven' as a whole – it's classic, clever euphoria, but this summer, festival goers will be dancing to a song about the end of the world, just as some of the characters on the record fiddle while Rome burns. "It's the Trojan Horse approach," says Michael. "Get your interesting lyrical idea into something that on the face of it is just there to be enjoyed."

## Everything Everything are

well aware that while they're calling attention to the issues that blight the world, they're also a diversion. The record explores this contradiction: on the dreamy, Afrobeat-indebted title track, Jon sings: "*As the tanks roll by under a blood black sky, I'm thinking, 'Where in the blazes did I park my car?'*" But 'No Reptiles' empathises with the desire to be absolved of responsibility for the world's messes, where inertia feels like its own protest and hiding under the covers is an escape: "*It's alright to feel like a fat child in a pushchair old enough to run*". It's a strange line that leaps out of its calm, glimmering surrounds and grows incrementally sadder with each listen.

"I wanted that absurdity," says Jon. "I feel absurd quite a lot of the time, and that my place in the world is fairly absurd, and that was the way it came to me. It's about feeling useless and inactive when you could be doing stuff. And responsibility is a good word – I don't think I'm very responsible in my own life, and I think as a whole, nobody really gives a crap any more – 'me culture' is here and it's real and it's not going anywhere."

"I think in Britain, at least, there's a sense that people want to put their head in the sand," adds Mikey. "That's why we're nostalgic for the '60s and have shows like *The Great British Bake Off* –"

"That awful fucking show," seethes Jeremy. "It's classic bread and circuses."

"But we're a distraction," says Mikey. "We're not saying we have any answers."

"Do we want to be giving all this stuff more airtime?" asks Alex. "Do we want people to be having a bad time? Is it such a bad thing to give relief to all this horrible stuff? There's so much horrible shit in the world – maybe people having a good time is exactly what we need."

"People dancing in spite of that, I think it's part of what we've always done," says Jon.

Everything Everything have been engaging with political ideas since 'Man Alive', though there they hid their assertions beneath frenetic production and occasionally incomprehensible lyrical delivery – few

people probably realised that 'MY KZ, UR BF' was about American foreign policy and the controversial practice of drone warfare. "'Arc' was more overt, but I think I had less to say," says Jon. "With this record, I just feel like time is running out for the band. There's

a certain amount of time people will bother listening to us at all, and it felt like, 'You can't just hang around forever not approaching things that feel uncomfortable.'"

"Not having the security of knowing if you'll be able to make another record is good, I think," Mikey continues. "We're always surprised when we are able to make a new album; it keeps us on our toes."

"I can't believe we're still here," adds Alex. "Just the fact that we're still getting support from Radio 1 – you see what else is on there and this piece of insanity we've made."

Alex's surprise doesn't feel misplaced. In an age where the UK's most successful pop acts are blandness incarnate, and the few rock bands that thrive are dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists, it's a strange pleasure to see a band as weird as Everything Everything – with their provocative ideas and unconventional, anti-macho revamp of what it is to be four white guys in a guitar band – climbing the Radio 1 playlist and reaching ever-wider audiences.

"It's a good feeling to put something in the world that moves people, even if it makes them feel uncomfortable," says Mikey. "I think, artistically, some people might hate this new album, but it's not bland and it's not boring, and I feel like a lot of art these days is so bland and homogenised – it's been

through a billion people and it's got squeezed through a load of systems. I feel like ours is a stronger flavour, and that's very satisfying. We're not just doing it for ourselves – we want people to connect with it and be moved by it. It has to be purposeful and meaningful." ■

## HEAVEN SENT

Everything Everything decode highlights from their third album

### To The Blade

**Jeremy:** "We didn't really have any idea of how we wanted the verses to sound. It was almost like Queen's 'Seven Seas Of Rye' – we recorded lots of different ideas, scrapped almost all of them and went for this lo-fi feeling of gaining consciousness rather than multiple arpeggios."

### The Wheel (Is Turning Now)

**Jon:** "It's about the way people have been fooled by Ukip and the right. It's this quasi-religious thing, like, 'He laid his hands on me and told me everything was going to be great, but he's also got these horrible fucking views' – the rise to power through horrible, manipulative ways."

### Zero Pharaoh

**Jon:** "It's about men as gods, talking about having absolute power. There's that line 'Why won't you ever say no' and not be corrupted, and then at the end I say, 'I'm going to be it – I'm going to be the dick now.'"

### No Reptiles

**Jon:** "It's talking about the feeling of feeling useless, inactive – saying, 'It's OK, I feel like a fat child in a pushchair, being pushed around when I could be doing stuff in my life.' But then I say, 'Old enough to fire a gun', and a million extra nuances come in – like maybe I should be in a pushchair if I'm going to go out and do something awful."





# WELCOME BACK TO THE TERRORDOME

Twenty-five years after its release, Public Enemy's most controversial album, 'Fear Of A Black Planet', is more relevant than ever. Kevin EG Perry assesses its lasting cultural impact

40

Public Enemy  
in 1989

**A**s Public Enemy's 'Fear Of A Black Planet' turns 25, it couldn't be more relevant. It stands as a masterpiece of righteous anger and furious energy. Lyrically, tracks like '911 Is A Joke' and 'Fight The Power' returned to the forefront of cultural discourse last year after the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown and countless others at the hands of the American police. Musically, The Bomb Squad's ability to create order from a white-noise chaos of sampled loops, stolen riffs and radio chatter foreshadowed the coming technological overload of the 21st century.

Yet the year leading up to the release of their third record had been the most difficult in Public Enemy's already storied history. Having formed on Long Island, New York, in 1982, the band's sample-heavy production style and Chuck D and Flavor Flav's politically charged lyrics quickly made them one of the most revered rap groups on the planet. Their debut record 'Yo! Bum Rush The Show' was named the best album of 1987 by *NME*, beating the likes of Prince's 'Sign 'O' The Times' and The Smiths' 'Strangeways, Here We Come'. They repeated the trick the following year, when 'It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back', which included the hits 'Bring The Noise' and 'Don't Believe The Hype', was named *NME*'s best album of 1988.



**In 1989**, the group found themselves embroiled in an ugly controversy. Professor Griff, the group's 'Minister Of Information', told *Melody Maker*: "If the Palestinians took up arms, went into Israel and killed all the Jews, it'd be alright." When grilled on this point by David Mills of the *Washington Times*, Griff went further still, saying: "Jews are responsible for the majority of the wickedness in the world." Chuck D first apologised for him, then called a press conference to announce that Griff would be suspended from Public Enemy. A week later, the group's label boss, Russell Simmons of Def Jam, announced that Chuck D had disbanded Public Enemy "for an indefinite period of

time". Within a couple of months, Chuck D returned to deny the group had disbanded, but a shadow had been cast over them. This was the context in which they wrote 'Fear Of A Black Planet' – knowing that their next release could make or break them.

Predictably, they didn't back down. 'Welcome To The Terrordome', released ahead of the album in January 1990, saw Chuck D rapping lines that many took to relate directly to the antisemitism controversy: "*Crucifixion ain't no fiction/So-called chosen frozen/Apology made to whoever pleases/Still they got me like Jesus*". Later, Chuck said that he wrote the song over the course of a two-day road trip to Allentown, Pennsylvania in the midst of the controversy. "I just let all the drama come out of me," he told *Billboard* magazine. "*I got so much trouble on my mind/I refuse to lose/Here's your ticket/Hear the drummer get wicked*". That was some true stuff. I just dropped everything I was feeling."

Although rightly apologetic for Griff's antisemitism, Public Enemy didn't let the controversy stop them writing angrily and graphically about the social problems they'd witnessed in American culture.

Most withering of all was '911 Is A Joke', in which a scornful Flavor Flav highlights differing police response times in black and white neighbourhoods. The song is a classic example of the symbiotic writing relationship between the group's two frontmen: Chuck D wrote the incendiary title and then passed it to his partner to build a song around. "It took a year, but Flavor was saying he had a personal incident that he could relate that to," Chuck said. "At the end of the year when it was time for him to record he was ready. Keith [Shocklee, Bomb Squad] had the track, and it was the funkier track I heard. It reminded me of uptempo Parliament/Funkadelic."

**After skewering the** police, Public Enemy then reset their sights and took aim at capitalism as a whole. 'Who Stole The Soul?' was their furious attack on the commodification of black culture, and Chuck D has called it one of their "most meaningful performance records". They weren't just calling for words or token apologies: they wanted action. "We talk about reparations," he remembered later. "Whoever stole the soul has to pay the price."

The album closes with the incendiary rage of 'Fight The Power'. Like the best protest music, it was a song written with a specific target in mind, and it has now become a universal anthem of political resistance. On a recent European tour, Chuck D told *NME* the song takes on the historical context of wherever it is played. "In Belgium, we dedicated 'Fight The Power' to the Democratic Republic of Congo," he said. "The memory of Patrice Lumumba [first democratically elected PM of Congo, who fought for independence from Belgium] will not be in vain. You have to be aware where you're going to when you step into somebody's home. That's the thing that sets us apart as different. We're not the normal rap group."

Sonically, too, they were no normal group. Sprawling over 20 tracks, 'Fear Of A Black Planet' is hip-hop at its most musically ambitious. Having toured as a support act for the Beastie Boys (as referenced in the radio phone-in samples that make up 'Incident At 66.6 FM'), they were inspired by the sample-laden 'Paul's Boutique', released in 1989, to add soul and jazz influences without

## "WE'RE NOT THE NORMAL RAP GROUP. WE'RE DIFFERENT"

**CHUCK D**

dialling down any of the anger of their earlier recordings.

Beastie Boys were in turn equally inspired by a band they considered their heroes. Adam Yauch later said: "Public Enemy completely changed the game musically... They made everything else sound clean and happy, and the power of the music perfectly matched the intention of the lyrics. They were also the first rap group to really focus on making albums – you can listen to '...Nation Of Millions...' or 'Fear Of A Black Planet' from beginning to end. They aren't just random songs tossed together."

It's a testament to Public Enemy's vision that out of the uncertainty of 1989 they were able to forge a masterpiece of both social commentary and musical innovation. Echoes of their anger and ambition can still be heard, 25 years on, in the verses and activism of Kendrick Lamar, Run The Jewels and Young Fathers.

'Fear Of A Black Planet' continues to challenge and provoke, precisely because it doesn't offer easy solutions to society's ills. Reviewing the album for *Melody Maker* in 1990, Simon Reynolds summed it up: "Public Enemy are important, not because of the thoroughly dubious 'answers' they propound in interview, but because of the angry questions that seethe in their music, in the very fabric of their sound; the bewilderment and rage that, in this case, have made for one hell of a strong, scary album." ■

## FEAR FACTORS

The most incendiary rhymes on 'Fear Of A Black Planet'

**"911 is a joke, we don't want 'em /I call a cab 'cos a cab will come quicker"**

'911 IS A JOKE'

With this damning indictment of the US emergency services, Flavor Flav is tapping into a key theme of the album – the emergence of an alienated black underclass.

**"Every brother ain't a brother/'Cos a black hand/Squeezed on Malcolm X the man"**

'WELCOME TO THE TERRORDOME'

Chuck D highlights the complexity of racial violence by pointing out that Malcolm X was assassinated by a fellow black man – a member of the Nation Of Islam organisation.

**"Yet our best trained, best educated, best equipped, best prepared troops refuse to fight/As a matter of fact, it's safe to say that they would rather switch than fight"**

'FIGHT THE POWER'

The opening sample is from a 1967 speech by Thomas 'TNT' Todd about Vietnam deserters. It parodies an advert of the era.



# Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD

NME  
FILM

ABERDEEN POLICE DEPT  
05 25 99 12615  
COBAIN KURT D



## Kurt Cobain: Montage Of Heck

Initiated by Courtney Love,  
this candid doc shows Kurt as a  
complex, irrational human being



### ► THE DETAILS

► DIRECTOR Brett Morgen  
► IN CINEMAS April 10

▶ You hear a lot of things about Kurt Cobain, some of them apparently contradictory. That he was funny. That he was tortured. That he was ambitious and hungry for fame. That he was independently minded

and a man of integrity. Twenty-one years on from his suicide, it's harder and harder to get a glimpse of him as he really was; not as a messianic 'icon' to be posted on Tumblr along with a profound quote, but as a complex, irrational, living and breathing human being. This is why *Montage Of Heck* is a film that, if you love or have ever loved Nirvana, will leave your head spinning.

At the invitation of Courtney Love, director Brett Morgen has been granted access to the Cobain archives, a treasure trove of notebooks, tapes and video footage, most of it previously unseen. Rather than a straight

retelling of the Nirvana story, the film weaves a dreamy and impressionistic path, with interviews flowing seamlessly into home-video footage, tape recordings and animations in which Kurt's artwork and notebook jottings are brought to life.

We start in snowy Aberdeen, Washington with shaky video footage of a young Kurt charging round a garden dressed as Batman, or bashing on a toy drumkit as grandmas gaze on indulgently. We hear phone conversations with Kurt's friend Buzz Osborne of the Melvins, in which the pair discuss *Over The Edge*, a film in which middle American teenagers wage war on police and parents alike; and there are present-day interviews with his estranged parents, and poor Tracey Marander, Kurt's first girlfriend, who worked to support the misfit boy she idolised while he sat at home and painted, played guitar, drew comic books.

The familiar facts, now so well known – signing to

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL



Sub Pop, the release of 'Bleach', blowing up in the UK – are dispatched via swift montages. Instead, we see fame from the inside, Kurt, Krist and Dave mugging through MTV idents and falling asleep in interviews. In one

## THE KURT LOCKER

Kurt's other big-screen appearances

**1991: The Year Punk Broke (David Markey, 1992)**



Sonic Youth are on tour in Europe, and they've brought a little band

called Nirvana along for the ride. By the time David Markey's wobbly Super-8 rockumentary hit theatres, Nirvana were headliners.

**Kurt & Courtney (Nick Broomfield, 1998)**



This imaginative piece of muck-raking by the UK filmmaker alleges that Kurt

didn't take his life, but was killed by a hitman at the behest of Courtney Love. It was due to be shown at the Sundance Film Festival, but Love threatened to sue the organisers if it was.

**Last Days (Gus Van Sant, 2005)**



Van Sant's curious 2005 feature follows the final hours of Blake, an

introspective rock'n'roll star, holed up in his mansion hiding away from friends, family and a private eye. Where on earth could he have got that idea from?

herself. Midway through, there's something that Krist Novoselic says that on first viewing stands out as odd in its emphasis, but on second viewing feels fundamental: "Kurt hated being humiliated. He hated it. He *hated* it." Twenty-one years from his death, Nirvana's frontman feels further away than ever, but maybe here we get one quick, clear glimpse of him: of a too-sensitive man who finally knew domestic bliss, but couldn't bear the prospect that it might, *might* all fall apart. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

9

## MORE ALBUMS

**Doldrums**  
**The Air Conditioned Nightmare** Sub Pop



Canadian electronic auteur Airick Woodhead continues his

odyssey into the weirder extremes of synthpop and techno with a second album named after American writer Henry Miller's 1945 account of his US travels. It has a nightmarish quality of its own, with strange juxtapositions of found sounds and jacking beats – brutal on the pummelling house of opener 'Hotfoot'; panicky on the hi-NRG phases of 'Loops' – but Woodhead lightens the mood on mid-paced jam 'We Awake' and the Marilyn Manson-lite industrial of 'Blow Away'. It's a tough record to get a handle on, all fidgety switches of tempo and style, but the slippery acid of 'Industry City' and woozy electronica of 'Closer 2 U' reveal the breadth of Woodhead's vision.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

**Tracey Thorn**  
**Songs From The Falling**

Strange Feeling



Writing songs for coming-of-age drama *The Falling*,

Everything But The Girl's Tracey Thorn says she was inspired by a scene in which pupils at a late-'60s girls school have a languid jam session during a music lesson. Thorn played every instrument on this 17-minute soundtrack EP, recording each part in a single take. The songs feel brisk and rough around the edges, but the 52-year-old's melodies are consistently sublime. Whether she's singing longingly over stark guitar riffs on 'It Was Always Me' or adding folksy backing vocals and woodblock percussion to 'All The Seasons', Thorn's melancholy music is completely captivating.

■ NICK LEVINE

8



**Warmdüscher**

**Khaki Tears**

Two Fat Whites and a dub experimentalist join forces to make filthy, Beefheartian grooves

► 'Warmdüscher' is a German word for a wimp, roughly translating as "you take warm showers". It seems like the sort of insult Saul Adamczewski and Jack Everett of Fat White Family would take to heart, given that they don't look like they shower at all. They're joined for this side project by vocalist Clams Baker, aka Mutado Pintado of underground dub experimentalists Paranoid London. Opening with the brilliantly messy 'Johnny's Blue Khaki', the trio's debut album is the sound of heavy machinery dancing, with Baker reciting broken poetry over the top. As you skulk through its sonic alleyways, you'll notice the shadows cast by Mark E Smith and Captain Beefheart. You'll hear screams and yelps of joy – notably on the dark groove of 'Uncle Sleepover', in which the protagonist proclaims: "I'm not going to eat what they shove in my face/I'm dressed for success". And by the time the rockabilly strut of 'Oscar Wilde' arrives, you'll be out of your seat altogether. The showers are out of order. Come wallow in the filth. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY



8

### ► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE April 6 ► LABEL Trashmouth ► PRODUCER Liam D May ► LENGTH 26:55 ► TRACKLISTING ►1. Johnny's Blue Khaki ►2. The Salamander ►3. Uncle Sleepover ►4. Yolk Buns USA ►5. Lady Eggs ►6. Roger's Gills ►7. The Honest Woman ►8. Oscar Wilde ►9. Hair Tongue ►10. Gold Teeth ► BEST TRACK Uncle Sleepover

### Squarepusher

**Damogen Furies** Warp



This follow-up to 2012's 'Ufabulum' finds Tom Jenkinson,

aka Squarepusher, creating each song live on his own music software, the energy of live performance colliding against the 40-year-old's dark musical imagination. 'Rayc Fire 2' is the sound of techno descending into hell in a rusting elevator, all

distorted synth and percussive intricacy, and 'Kwang Bass' is pure electronic dirt, a metallic beat piling into fevered acid squelches. 'Stor Eiglass' is lighter, reimagining The Cure's 'Just Like Heaven' for gabba robots. This is a record to file alongside Aphex Twin's 'Suro': one-of-a-kind electronic artist returns reinvigorated and still way ahead of the game.

■ BEN CARDEW

8



## Skinny Lister

Down On Deptford Broadway Xtra Mile



A flagon of rum hoiked to their lips and their teeth

smashed from a fight – a story told here on the rambunctious 'Trouble On Oxford Street' – London shanty-punk quintet Skinny Lister swagger into their second album so full of pirate bravado they even mimic Adam Ant's 'Prince Charming' on opener 'Raise A Wreck'. This urban sister-piece to 2012's more pastoral 'Forge & Flagon' is gloriously drunken jig-along -the-gangplank fun, taking in lock-ins with your dad ('George's Glass'), kicking-out time sing-alongs ('Six Whiskies') and pub princesses ('Bold As Brass'). These are boozing songs of love, conflict and elopement brewed from intoxicating hooks, so embrace your inner Pogue.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

## Colin Stetson & Sarah Neufeld

Never Were The Way She Was Constellation



The two finest soloists from Montreal label

Constellation combine here for something far greater than the sum of its parts. Michigan saxophonist and touring member of Arcade Fire Colin Stetson has great mastery of his instrument: he sings through it, generates percussion from it and uses creatively placed mics to make it sound otherworldly. Violinist Sarah Neufeld (who also tours with Arcade Fire) utilises a similar versatility to lift her partner's intensely brooding textures, as on opener 'The Sun Roars Into View', making for a seamless pairing. Expertly controlled energy – best exemplified on the title track – unfolds like a well-crafted score to an imagined film.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

7

# The Wombats

## Glitterbug

Embracing pop, the Liverpoolians' move away from the indie disco brings mixed results



Since 2007, The Wombats have fulfilled a basic human, but peculiarly British, need for melodic, irreverent indie pop that doesn't take itself too seriously. They've always hinted at an inner turmoil beneath their external sanguinity, but the Liverpool trio's last album, 2011's 'This Modern Glitch', was 'dark' like Ant & Dec with a mild hangover: even when singing about one-night stands, vampiric cityscapes or the black dog of depression, they couldn't help but sound wholesomely pre-watershed.

This follow-up similarly aspires to be more than your standard collection of disposable indie night fodder. Inspired by frontman Matt Murphy's sojourns in Los Angeles, 'Glitterbug' documents a turbulent (and apparently fictional) relationship between an English boy and a Californian girl, though if you weren't



### THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE April 6 ►LABEL 14th Floor ►PRODUCERS Mark Crew, The Wombats ►LENGTH 39:49 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Emoticons ►2. Give Me A Try ►3. Greek Tragedy ►4. Be Your Shadow ►5. Headspace ►6. This Is Not A Party ►7. Isabel ►8. Your Body Is A Weapon ►9. The English Summer ►10. Pink Lemonade ►11. Curveballs ►BEST TRACK Headspace

already aware of that, the narrative is kept vague enough that you might never notice it. Naturally, their sense of humour, not to mention their fondness for pop culture references, remains intact – the opening track is called 'Emoticon' and its first line is about how "It's tough to stay objective, baby/With your tongue abseiling down my neck" – but on the whole, this is a more mature, less gratingly zany offering than its predecessors. It's also one which largely abandons the sonic pretence of being an 'indie' band in favour of becoming a 'pop' one.

Mostly, 'Glitterbug' occupies an equidistant point between Passion Pit and The 1975; only 'The English Summer' and 'Pink Lemonade' bear much resemblance to the antsy, fidgety post-punk The Wombats made their name with, and both end up falling flat. In its place are the sleek, synth-laden likes of 'Be Your Shadow' and 'Headspace' – precision-engineered for mass appeal, but no less effective for it. Not everything works quite so well – insipid single 'Give Me A Try' is an instant left-swipe of a song, and 'Curveballs' provides an anticlimactic ending, bringing closure to the album's narrative and little else besides – but a certain amount of filler is always going to be *de rigueur* for a band like The Wombats. They'll live or die by their singles, and 'Glitterbug' finds them in better-than-decent nick.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

6

## Demob Happy

Young & Numb EP Milk Parlour/SO



Long-haired Brighton quartet Demob Happy's

debut EP is a prowling exercise in sleazy riffs and purring disaffection. The title track is pure Queens Of The Stone Age – all heavy, dirty grind and seductive vocals from lead singer Matthew Marcantonio that cast a lyrical eye over the passive,

glazed-eyed Twitter generation and find it lacking ("You're so comfortable in your serfdom/Maybe you're just young and numb"). 'Fizz' rattles along in barely two minutes, like an early incarnation of Kings Of Leon, 'Succubus' – released as a single last year – balances grizzly bass with melodic guitar hooks and 'Milk Parlour' is a glorious clatter of sweaty bar room rock'n'roll. A filthy opening statement.

■ LISA WRIGHT

8

## La Shark

Imaginary Music Pledge Music



With their high-octane promotional videos and gaudy kids'

TV dress sense, there's a nagging sense of the 'zany' about Londoners La Shark. Onstage, improbably named singer Samuel Geronimo Deschamps' ceiling-swinging antics tend to overshadow the tunes, but this, the quintet's

much-delayed debut album, is interesting and eclectic rather than just annoyingly odd (it could have gone either way). The clackety 'Fiji (I'm In Heaven)' and 'World Wide Babes' hit like The B-52's done by Micachu & The Shapes, and while Deschamps' whining voice is divisive, laid over the Michael Jackson funk of 'Imaginary Music' and 'Toy Box' it helps the record stay just about on the right side of weird.

■ JAMIE FULLERTON

6

# Reviews

## Spring King They're Coming After You! EP Handsome Dad



Last September, Spring King released 'Demons',

a five-track EP that whizzed by in less than 15 minutes. This follow-up only hangs around for three minutes longer, but the Manchester foursome, fronted by song-writing drummer Tarek

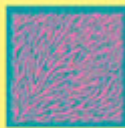
Musa, have added depth to their punky lo-fi. Opener 'City' is the sort of indie floorfiller The Hives would approve of and 'Dream Boy' is similarly boisterous, but the most exciting of the five songs here are the last two. The simple riff and lonely lyrics ("I'm a broken mess without you next to me") on the waltzing 'Early Bird' evoke Girls, and the plinking melody of 'In All This Murk And Dirt' shows there's far more to Spring King than just speed.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

## Mile Me Deaf Eerie Bits Of Future Trips

Siluh



Mile Me Deaf is a long-running DIY project of Viennese

musician Wolfgang Möstl, guitarist in excellent Austrian noise-pop group Sex Jams. This fourth album finds Möstl working with a pile of electric guitars, synths and tape recorders, slathering fast and fuzzy tunes with collages of faraway vocals

and animal noises. The squealing, overdriven riffs of 'Off The Core' and 'Seekers' easily transcend their home-fashioned origins, carrying the casually devastating thrills that My Bloody Valentine once wrung out with ease. With nods to early Mac DeMarco ('Extended Fraud') and the woozy imagination of Stephen Malkmus ('Living In A Shrinking Hell'), there's plenty for fans of inventive lo-fi to dig into.

■ STUART HUGGETT

7

## White Arrows In Bardo Votiv

Votiv



Alarm bells are ringing from the off on Los Angeles

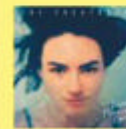
quartet White Arrows' second album. Referencing Buddhist teachings with your album title? Synth sounds patched directly from MGMT's first record? A singer calling himself Mickey Church? Before you can say "Fourth Summer of Love? Fuck off, mate", we're hearing about UFOs on ambling, Yeasayer-ish opener 'I Want A Taste'. Of course we are. It gets worse, too: "Suffering brings me truth" ('Chill Winston') and "Only the young die young" ('We Can't Ever Die') are puzzling non sequiturs that, like the rest of 'In Bardo', aren't half as clever as they think they are. On the plus side, if you want to hear this kind of modern psychedelic rock done properly, Pond have a new record out.

■ ROB WEBB

4

## The Preatures Blue Planet Eyes

Virgin



When Sydney quintet The Preatures play live,

singer Izzy Manfredi throws herself around, indulging in onstage gymnastics and careering into the crowd. Debut album 'Blue Planet Eyes' – which topped the Australian charts last year – is crammed with pop-rock guitar, groovy bass and danceable drumbeats. The addictive title track and 'Is This How You Feel' are the best of the perkier stuff, but it's the two tracks that straddle the record's mid-section that show The Preatures at their most interesting. 'Two Tone Melody' is a swampy, maudlin love song indebted to Fleetwood Mac, and 'Rock And Roll Rave' moulds dirty bass and noisy guitar into a sleazy, dangerous pop song well worth a cartwheel or two.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

# Waxahatchee

## Ivy Tripp

The confessional singer sounds as wounded as ever on her gutsy third album



On her first two albums, 2012's 'American Weekend' and 2013's 'Cerulean Salt', Alabama-raised singer-songwriter Katie Crutchfield backed exquisitely delicate melodies with a tough grunge sensibility. The 26-year-old's simple songs

about love and loss cut deep, thanks to the bedroom production style and guitar more ragged than Kurt Cobain's favourite cardigan. In the two years since 'Cerulean Salt', Crutchfield has become something of a poster girl for heavy-hearted indie kids. She's also toured with Jenny Lewis, featured on the soundtrack to US zombie drama *The Walking Dead* and worked with Sleater-Kinney's Carrie Brownstein and other female musicians for online magazine *Rookie*, collaboratively creating a song called 'Go Forth, Feminist Warriors'.

After this increasing headway, 'Ivy Tripp' is slicker than its predecessors, but Crutchfield's emotional rawness hasn't been glossed over. "I watch you anxiously/The pain it's celestial/The pain it's serene", she near spits on the full-band fury of 'Poison', evidently still fully

fucked off with the object of her affections. With harmonies from her sister Allison (who makes frayed indie of her own in Swearin'), 'Stale By Noon' is a lighter take on the same romantic confusion, as over ponderous Casiotone keys she moons, "I can imitate some kind of love/Or I could see if for what it is/And stop kidding myself". She offloads the burden on 'Under A Rock', though, shrugging "now you're someone else's mess tonight" while clattering through a lilting punk kiss-off.

The majority of these 13 songs loiter around the two-and-a-half-minute mark, but album number three doesn't go by in a flash. Drone-assisted opener 'Breathless', the acoustic-led 'Summer Of Love' and the peaceful piano-plinking 'Half Moon' give 'Ivy Tripp' a generous feeling of space and uncomplicated calm, like a leisurely glass of moderately priced wine at the end of a frantic day. They offer breathing room around jangling rock'n'roll sucker-punch 'The Dirt', 'Grey Hair's gutsy riffing and the drum-machine stutters of 'La Loose',

which come over like Le Tigre reclining beachside on a lazy summer afternoon. 'Ivy Tripp' finds Katie Crutchfield wounded as ever, then, but she's putting up one hell of a fight.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8



## THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE April 6 ►LABEL Wichita ►PRODUCER Kyle Gilbride, Keith Spencer and Katie Crutchfield ►LENGTH 36:04 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Breathless ►2. Under A Rock ►3. Poison ►4. La Loose ►5. Stale By Noon ►6. The Dirt ►7. Blue ►8. Air ►9. ►10. Grey Hair ►11. Summer Of Love ►12. Half Moon ►13. Bonfire ►BEST TRACK Poison



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# FILM

# Sonic Highways

The TV companion to the Foo's latest album is a loving portrait of US music history



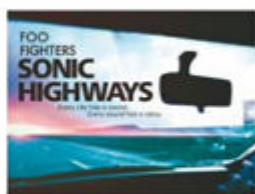
In the third episode of *Sonic Highways*, Dave Grohl sits behind the mixing desk of the Nashville studio where he's producing the Zac Brown Band's new EP, and straight-up admits to the group – who have sold more than five million albums in America – that he'd never heard a note of their music until earlier that day. The look on their faces is priceless, but that's not why we're mentioning it. *Sonic Highways* is named after last year's album, which was recorded in the eight US cities this series visits, dedicating an hour-long episode to each one. It's full of moments when Grohl professes his ignorance of the myriad scenes and subgenres that grew out of these cities, and it's almost always to his credit. The 46-year-old never tries to set himself up as some sort of all-knowing cultural historian, doing for American music what Scorsese does for American cinema; *Sonic Highways* is often as much of an education for its director as it is for the viewer.

For much of the series, he and his fellow Foo Fighters are geeking out or cracking up, and that's even more entertaining – witness Grohl's amazement at discovering a piano played by Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino and Tom Waits gathering dust in the bowels of the Austin City Limits studio, or Taylor Hawkins' squeals of delight as he watches Joe Walsh record his guitar solo on 'Outside'. The Foo's individual stories inevitably intersect with some of the places they pitch

up in – notably Grohl's apprenticeship with Virginia hardcore band Scream, his fateful relocation to Seattle, and Pat Smear's experiences in the LA punk scene of the late '70s – and Grohl is occasionally guilty of focusing too much on what he already knows. For that reason, the show tends to work best when they're far outside their comfort zone, among people whose musical philosophy is completely alien to their own, such as New Orleans' Preservation Hall Jazz Band, many of whom are fourth-generation members, or the hierarchical hit factory of Nashville.

The scale of the series' task only really becomes apparent when you take into account everything that's been left out or glossed over: it's simply not possible to tell the musical story of a city like New York or LA in an hour of television. Nevertheless, *Sonic Highways* makes a pretty

decent fist of it, aided by Grohl's earnest nerdiness and an absolutely stellar cast of talking heads – one of the perks of being Dave Grohl is that you can get everyone from Barack Obama to ZZ Top to sit down with you. If you're a Foo Fighters fan, it's obviously required viewing. But *Sonic Highways* is really about the music that existed before them and the traditions that will hopefully endure long after they're gone. ■ BARRY NICOLSON



► **DIRECTOR** Dave Grohl  
► **RELEASE DATE** On DVD and Blu-ray April 7

## CINEMA

### Altman



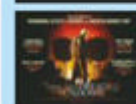
Although he's now considered to be among the great American directors who

came to prominence in the 1970s, Robert Altman never won a competitive Oscar, despite five nominations (he was given an honorary award in 2006, the year that he died). He had hits (*M\*A\*S\*H*, *Nashville* and *Gosford Park*), but he was the eternal outsider. This new documentary – directed by Ron Mann and featuring cameos from James Caan, Bruce Willis and Robin Williams, among others – portrays him as a thorn in the side of Hollywood, but also at the mercy of Hollywood, which funded his films. Made in association with Altman's family, it's more of a tribute than a critical reappraisal – an annoyingly soft look at a director whose own films never pulled any punches. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

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## CINEMA

### The Town That Dreaded Sundown



Between February and May 1946, a serial

killer known as The Phantom attacked eight people in the town of Texarkana, between Texas and Arkansas. The story was the subject of Charles B Pierce's 1976 film *The Town That Dreaded Sundown*. In this modern update, directed by Alfonso Gomez-Rejon (*American Horror Story*) and produced by Jason Blum (*Paranormal Activity*), a teenager is butchered after watching the original film at a drive-in, but his friend Jaimi is spared, and begins a quest to unmask the killer, a wooden-voiced thug with a sack over his head (Andy Abele). Choppy camerawork and twilit scenes conjure eerie dreaminess, but scary moments are scarce and the twist is ham-fisted. It's a disappointing tribute to one of the original American slasher movies. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

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## CINEMA

### Jauja



There are many moments of desolate beauty in Argentinian director Lisandro Alonso's seventh film, and the unusual format – an almost square screen, with rounded corners – enhances the sense of peering into a lost world. But the story Alonso tells is confusing and incoherent, and his reluctance to offer any explanation makes watching

the film an exasperating experience. Viggo Mortensen gives a doggedly blank performance as Danish soldier Gunnar Dinesen, traversing an unnamed South American desert in search of his runaway daughter. Alonso is aiming for territory mapped out by Samuel Beckett or Ingmar Bergman, but his attempts at profundity end up feeling as empty as the superbly shot landscape. ■ ANGUS BATEY

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## CINEMA

### John Wick



In this directorial debut from stunt actor David Leitch – Brad Pitt's double in *Fight Club* – retired hitman John Wick (Keanu Reeves) is grieving for his wife, helped by a Beagle puppy she sent from her deathbed. He's awakened from his torpor when a former business associate's son, Josef (Alfie Allen, *Game Of Thrones* star and brother of Lily), breaks

into Wick's house to steal his car and kills the puppy. Wick embarks on a mission to kill Josef and anyone who stands in his way, including the boy's mobster father (Michael Nyqvist). Reeves' brutal anti-hero is convincing and if you can accept that a dead dog is the motivation for his killing spree – which includes turning a nightclub's VIP pool into a bloodbath – this stylish thriller offers a well-paced and exciting ride. ■ NICK LEVINE

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# Charli XCX

## Concorde 2, Brighton

Tuesday, March 24

The NME Award winner's first headline tour opens with mass pogoing and a blow-up guitar

PHOTO BY ANDY FORD

▶ In front of an eye-battering wall of illuminated, strobing amps and a three-piece band sporting silver dresses and angel wings (Charli's Angels, anyone?), Charli XCX – opening her long-awaited debut headline tour a month after blitzing the NME Awards with Austin, Texas – is full of flash and glamour. It's contagious – during the the opening whomp of 'Sucker', the 600 pogoing kids inside Concorde 2 threaten to bounce out of this beachside venue and into the sea. Repeatedly exhorting Brighton to "Make some fucking noise!", Charli powers effortlessly through her drumbeat-heavy hits, including Icona Pop collaboration 'I Love It', new single 'Famous' and a cover of Swedish punks Snuffed By The Yakuza's 'Allergic To Love'. The peak, though, arrives when she brings out a huge inflatable guitar to rock through 'Gold Coins', after which the final wallop of 'Boom Clap' blows the roof off like a lightning strike.

■ STUART HUGGETT

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Charli XCX  
onstage in  
Brighton



The

# Vaccines

Rock City, Nottingham

Friday, March 27

The opening night of their first UK tour since 2013 sees them finally come of age

"I feel a bit shellshocked, to be honest," admits wide-eyed Vaccines bassist Árni Árnason, dragging on a cigarette behind Rock City, shortly after coming offstage. In the dressing room minutes later, support band Cheatahs arrive with three bottles of champagne ready to be popped. There's plenty to celebrate.

Tonight is the first show of The Vaccines' first full UK tour since 2013, and most fans' first chance to hear material from their imminent third record, 'English Graffiti', produced by Dave Fridmann. As the lights dim before the band emerge, some sections of the crowd can barely contain themselves, sending their pints flying into the air.

"Rock City!" yells frontman Justin Young as the quartet – bolstered to five by touring keyboardist Tim Lanham and dressed in uniform dark denim – surge into 'Teenage Icon'. Illuminated neon piping lines their amps and lasers shoot from the stage. It's slick and stunning, an immediate sign that The Vaccines are upping their game.

That feeling intensifies as they drop new songs. The creeping 'Dream Lover' softens the rowdy atmosphere to something sultrier.

Despite being unfamiliar, it commands attention, with Pete Robertson's thwacking drums giving moody backing to Freddie Cowan's minimal guitar licks and Justin's restrained vocals.

An impassioned version of old favourite 'Wetsuit' comes before second 'English Graffiti' tune 'Want You So Bad', which Justin has previously described as his "best attempt at being sexy". Hip-shaking guitar lines float slowly over the swaying audience as the singer sighs, "I want you so bad". By the end there's a sense that fans want something to shout along to – a bit of The Vaccines' pumped-up rough and tumble to get their weekend started.

The band, though, are moving on from the knowingly simple, Ramones-influenced rock'n'roll vignettes that made them famous. Dotted throughout the set, new songs 'Dream

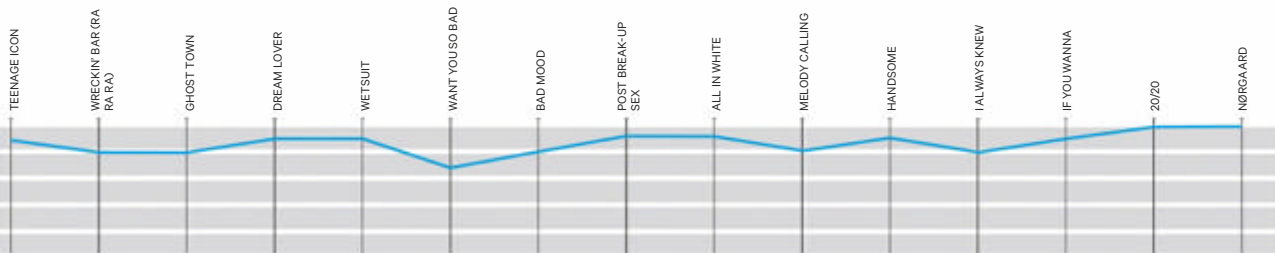
Lover', 'Want You So Bad' and '20/20' are full of ideas far more elaborate than pure punk stomping. The latter is the set's clear highlight – a rampant, emotional romp fuelled by Freddie's intricate, fuzzy guitars and Justin's strained assertions of "I'm through thinking about you".

Of the four new tracks, only 'Handsome' bears any similarity to the Vaccines of old. Packed with attitude, it's a punk-flecked pogo through self-assured lyrics ("I'm handsome, so handsome") and jagged guitars. It's purpose-built for sticky-floored indie dives, and the audience unites in attempting to roar back Justin's lyrics. When he's not singing, the frontman picks the riff on a shiny white acoustic. It's ironic that The Vaccines called their last album 'Come Of Age', because that's exactly what they're doing this time round.



## SETLIST

How good?





The Vaccines (l-r): Freddie Cowan, Pete Robertson, Justin Young, Árni Árnason

## Justin Young on...

### ...First-night nerves

**Justin:** "I was really intimidated. It's been a while since we played a proper show. I'd forgotten how impassioned people could be. It kind of threw me. I'd forgotten what it was like to play in England."

### ...Playing the new songs

"Because everyone was singing along to every word of all the older songs, you're definitely aware when you're playing new ones. I always make eye contact when I see people anyway, so I was doing that as we were playing new ones and there was definitely a willingness

to like them. I think 'Handsome' went down amazingly, so I was happy with that."

### ...Selling the jackets from the 'Handsome' video at the merch stand

"We want to make fans feel like part of our gang. We've always done that with varsity jackets. We constantly talk about that gang mentality, and if you look at old photos from Smiths gigs there's kids dressed exactly like Morrissey. I really like the idea of trying to create something similar. I'm not sure people wanna dress like us, but they wanna dress like us in that video."

As if to highlight how far they've come, Justin introduces 2011's 'Post Break-Up Sex' as "a song we did years ago when we played here as the first band on a four-band bill". More pint chucking greets its familiar chords, but it's notable how much older it and other debut album tracks 'If You Wanna' and 'All In White' sound.

Justin ditches his guitar for 'Nørgaard', and after pacing the lip of the stage with his mic lead flailing behind him he jumps down into the photo pit to prowl along the barrier. He's greeted by waves of crowdsurfers and a flurry of grabbing hands. Once he's safely hoisted back onstage, they blister through the remainder of the song and leave Nottingham winded. Let the champagne flow. ■ RHIAN DALY

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## MORE GIGS

### Gengahr Bleach, Brighton

Wednesday, March 25  
Londoners Gengahr strike lucky with a big Brighton crowd tonight. Bathed in cool blue light, the quartet waft through a shimmering but sprightly set, Felix Bushe's choirboy vocals floating like vapour trails over compact dub rhythms. Current single 'She's A Witch' elicits the biggest cheers, with punchy new track 'Trampoline' following close behind, willowy guitarist John Victor rocking out behind his fringe like he's on a transfer from Suede. That such polite boys can turn out lyrics as gruesome as those on 'Fill My Gums With Blood' ("Why don't you let me in/So I can drink from you") is a matter for their psychiatrists, however.

■ STUART HUGGETT

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### Dutch Uncles The Ritz, Manchester

Saturday, 27 March  
"Friday night, math rock, let's do it, baby," demands Duncan Wallis at Dutch Uncles' biggest ever headline show. Singing racy lyrics in a newly androgynous vocal tone, the singer completed his transformation into prog-pop's answer to Prince on recent album 'O Shudder', so this hometown gig has the jagged guitars dialled down, instead placing the emphasis on synthesizers. During sleek recent single 'Decided Knowledge', the tiny Wallis puppet from the track's video sits atop an amp, mimicking the frontman's trademark twitchy moves. Liverpool trio Stealing Sheep – who collaborated on 'O Shudder' – appear for closer 'Be Right Back' and dance around to its extended King Crimson wig-out. Clearly, every night should be math-rock night.

■ ROBERT COOKE

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# Courtney Barnett



## Brudenell Social Club, Leeds Sunday, March 29

The introspective Melbourne songwriter turns her deadpan humour up to 11

A billowing white sheet hangs around the Brudenell's stage, enveloping Courtney Barnett's power trio. Joined by bassist Bones Sloane and drummer Dave Mudie, the 26-year-old ambles through material new and old as though a metronome set to 'stoic' is controlling the evening's beat.

'Elevator Operator', from recent album 'Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit', comes on like The Rolling Stones pressed through a filter of deadpan humour and sarcasm. An excellent version of 'Depreston', set in her hometown of Melbourne, sees Barnett's voice switch from monotone to melody. There's warmth in its description of the minutiae of house hunting ("It's got a lovely garden/A garage for two cars to park in/Or a lot of room for storage if you've just got one"). The aggressive 'Kim's Caravan' adds depth, its guitars building hard and fast.

As the show edges towards its climax, the energy between this introspective storyteller and her expectant audience intensifies. Barnett breaks into banter – responding to the crowd's appreciative cheers, she says, "Courtney Barnett. Yes. Thank you. That's my name. I'd ask everyone else's name, but it would take a really long time."

'Pedestrian At Best' closes the main set, and turns the dry wit up to 11 ("I think you're a joke but I don't find you very funny"). With a snarl in her voice, Barnett plunders the last of her energy reserves, peaking on her new record's lead single, the track the crowd have all turned up to hear. ■ HAYLEY AVRON

### SETLIST

- ▶ Dead Fox
- ▶ Canned Tomatoes
- ▶ An Illustration Of Loneliness (Sleepless In New York)
- ▶ Elevator Operator
- ▶ Small Poppies
- ▶ Lance Jr
- ▶ Depreston
- ▶ Kim's Caravan
- ▶ Avant Gardener
- ▶ History Eraser
- ▶ Pedestrian At Best
- ▶ Nobody Really Cares If You Don't Go To The Party

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# Burgerama

Saturday, March 28

The Observatory, Santa Ana, California

The slacker-punk festival provides thrills aplenty in sleepy Orange County

For the past eight years, California's Burger Records has been leaking rock'n'roll weirdness into the strait-laced suburbs of Orange County. As well as putting out records and limited cassettes by everyone from Cali hardcore supergroup OFF! and Vermont lo-fi hero King Tuff to Dave Grohl and Ryan Adams, they stage their own annual festival. Now in its fourth and biggest year, Burgerama is a slacker-punk carnival.

2015's bill ropes together power-pop icons Weezer and the cream of California's homegrown crop, with FIDLAR, Together Pangea and Madlib all representing alongside Texan Roky Erickson of The 13th Floor Elevators and Brits abroad Palma Violets. There's musical clout in the crowd, too: Kim Gordon can be spotted chilling at the bar away from the blazing sunshine.

**Public Access TV's** taut NYC rock eases us into the afternoon, with frontman John Eatherly – his stonewashed denim stained with sweat – jittering through 'In The Mirror'. Georgia trio

**The Coathangers** plug in perfectly to Los Angeles' garage-rock heritage with a frantic cover of The Gun Club's 1981 track 'Sex Beat'. Less raw are Oklahoma's **Broncho**, whose bubblegum sound gives way to

some full-on rock-star posing that verges on hair metal.

Burgerama's unofficial uniform seems to be US punk tees, with everyone from GG Allin and Adolescents to Black Flag and The Descendents well represented. **Together Pangea** join in with their raging punk, and give a lyrical nod to Dead Kennedys with the rattling 'Too Drunk To Cum'. The title track from last year's 'Badillac' follows, as does a hardcore retelling of The Cranberries' 1994 smash 'Zombie'.

**Sarah Bethel Nelson** – a San Franciscan barmaid-turned-singer backed by former Thee Oh Sees drummer Mike Shoun – isn't quite as ramshackle. At first, she recalls Neil Young with woozy truckin' tunes like 'We're

## THE MOSHING IS SO HARD FOR PALMA VIOLETS, THE PIT LOOKS LIKE IT'S LEVITATING

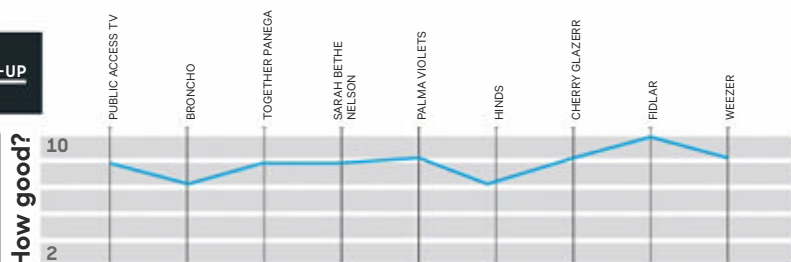
Not Dead', but a wig-out finale flashes with hugeness worthy of Fleetwood Mac's 'Songbird'.

Nelson's Zen spell is instantly broken by **Palma Violets**, who, as one of the only British bands on the bill, clearly reckon they have something to prove. Chilli Jesson perches on the raised lip of the stage for 'Rattlesnake Highway'. New single 'Danger In The Club' is a leery, beery cacophony and 'Step Up For The Cool Cats' sees Chilli aiming his bass shotgun-like at the crowd, who mosh so hard that the pit looks as though it's levitating.

Off the back of a frenzied SXSW, Madrid quartet **Hinds** are touring across the US, so it's not surprising that they seem a little drained, with 'Bamboo' sounding especially woozy. More energetic are Los Angeles high-school tearaways **Cherry Glazerr**. 'Grilled Cheese', the trio's 2013 single about the perfect grilled cheese sandwich, is the pick of their gooey grunge. **FIDLAR** stride onto the main stage in front of giant Chinese lantern-headed replicas of themselves, complete with terrifying glowing eyes. With a new album due this year, these scruffy skate rats come on like a proper, all-guns-blazing rock foursome. Their former scrappiness is replaced by lean guitar muscle



### LINE-UP







(Clockwise from left) Weezer, Fidlär, Together Pangea and Palma Violets

and they turbo-thrash through 'Cheap Beer', 'Stoked And Broke' and 'Cocaine'. After airing a pair of bratty-sounding new songs, frontman Zac Carper regales the swarming mosh with tales of losing his virginity in the toilet of a fast-food eatery near the festival site. Stay classy, Fidlär.

Hometown headliners **Weezer** know full well that only a greatest hits set is acceptable. Laying their celebrated geek rock on as thick as the LA smog, they power through 'My Name Is Jonas', 'Hash Pipe', 'Beverly Hills', 'Say It Ain't So' and 'Buddy Holly', as well as an exhilarating rendition of 'Back To The Shack', for which they're joined on drums by Rivers Cuomo's formerly estranged jazz-drummer father for the first time ever. It's the final treat in a day loaded with them. All hail Burgerama – bringing people together and getting them drunk on punk since 2012.

■ LEONIE COOPER



## MORE GIGS

### Splashh

Boston Arms, London

Wednesday, March 25

This is Splashh's first UK show since November 2013, and only three songs from that period remain in their set. Between sizzling versions of 'Feels Like You', 'All I Wanna Do' and 'Need It', the quintet (including new members Jaie Gonzalez on keys and drummer Angus Tarnawsky) showcase Splashh v2.0, and they've swapped grunge-pop for rave. 'Dalphine Odora' is a mesh of synths and frontman Sasha Carlson's faraway vocals, and 'Look Down To Turn Away' is slower and moodier. But tonight is about euphoria: the ecstatic peaks of finale 'Pure Blue' prompt a mass of bouncing bodies. New album 'Honey + Salt' can't come soon enough.

■ RHIAN DALY

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### Nicki Minaj

The O2, London

Saturday, March 28

"Who here got someone they wanna shit on?" Nicki Minaj asks before the faecal-themed 'Did It On 'Em'. Though the 32-year-old's performance has arena production values – dry ice, ripped dancers and a video montage in which she proclaims herself a "professional icon" – it's her fiery attitude that really impresses. Initially she's detached, even forgetting to introduce Jessie Ware before 'The Crying Game', but soon the New York rapper is in full flow. Climaxing with dance-flavoured bangers 'The Night Is Still Young' and 'Starships', Minaj turns this airy dome into a basement sweatbox on a New York backstreet.

■ NICK LEVINE

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# Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds



Royal Albert Hall, London

Saturday, March 28

Noel tells a devoted crowd he's "fucking brilliant" at a hit-packed Teenage Cancer Trust charity show

For a man who named his new record 'Chasing Yesterday', Noel Gallagher isn't one for looking back. Given the embarrassment of riches in the 47-year-old's back catalogue, he could easily tour an Oasis-heavy set, but prefers to focus on his latest work. Or as he puts it with characteristic modesty to the 5,000-odd people gathered in the Royal Albert Hall for this Teenage Cancer Trust show: "I'm going to play you some new songs off my fucking brilliant new album."

### SETLIST

- Do The Damage
- (Stranded On) The Wrong Beach
- Everybody's On The Run
- Fade Away
- In The Heat Of The Moment
- Lock All The Doors
- Riverman
- The Death Of You And Me
- You Know We Can't Go Back
- Champagne Supernova
- Ballad Of The Mighty I
- Dream On
- The Dying Of The Light
- The Mexican
- AKA... Broken Arrow
- Digsy's Dinner
- If I Had A Gun...
- Don't Look Back In Anger
- AKA... What A Life!
- The Masterplan

Not that he's changed his tune, or tunes, very much since the glory days. Opener 'Do The Damage' channels the driving energy of 'Rock'n'Roll Star', much to the delight of the capacity crowd. They lose it completely to 'Everybody's On The Run', the first Big Moment of the night. Then it's straight into the first Oasis tune – 1994 B-side 'Fade Away'.

Noel regularly interacts with a crowd who all treat him like the Messiah. Well, almost all. Everyone's on their feet except for a couple of guys who've ended up in Noel's eye-line. "These bald geezers are sat down in the front row," he sighs. "It's doing my head in."

Public shaming dealt with, Noel hears one fan shout that he loves him and replies, "I love you too. Did you buy an album? Did you buy a T-shirt? Did you buy a programme? Then I love you. And my wife loves you. And my kids definitely love you." He dedicates 'You Know We Can't Go Back' to "my beautiful wife, who's rat-arsed in a box up there somewhere", and then goes one better by dedicating 'Champagne Supernova' to "me, because quite clearly I'm fucking brilliant".

There's not a lot of variation in tempo or volume – a disappointment for those who'd like to see Noel letting a little more light and shade into his sets. He also sticks strictly to the musical script of his recent arena tour – there are no special moments to match 2013's Albert Hall team-up with Damon Albarn. Those quibbles aside, Noel's on fine form. The night's last song is one of Oasis'

greatest tunes, a deservedly retained B-side. It's the perfect send-off. It's all part of the masterplan.

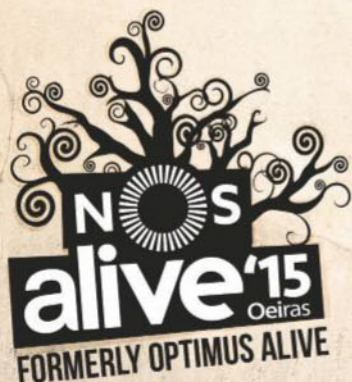
■ KEVIN EG PERRY

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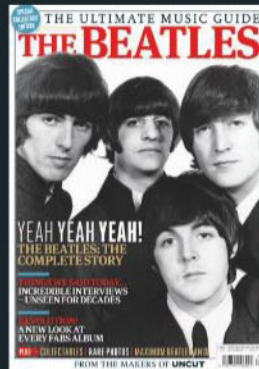
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# THIS WEEK IN 1975



## BARRY WHITE GIGS

**Ringo: A lot of money for a lot of plugs**

T. DREAM? But can you dance to it?

FACES in US: Schmexclusive gossip from Schmalifornia

PATTI SMITH: New First Lady of punk rock?

## Starr power

**Ringo gives his first interview in years and introduces the world to his imaginatively titled and short-lived label, Ring O'Records**

NME's Bob Woffinden meets Ringo Starr at the London HQ of Polydor to discuss the launch of the former Beatle's new label, Ring O'Records ("he's never been one to tax the old imagination unnecessarily," writes Woffinden). With Ringo is David Hentschel, a "synthesist" who's "built like a rugby player" and is the label's first signing. Strangely, Hentschel's debut, 'Startling Music', is a sort-of covers album of Ringo's 'Ringo' from 1973. "At first we were a bit strict, trying to get him to do exact copies of the songs," explains Ringo. "Then he played us one he'd arranged himself, 'Devil Woman' – and it worked. So we sent

'im back to do a few more how he wanted them." Conversation turns to other albums Ringo has been listening to. He mentions Lennon's sixth solo album, 'Rock N'Roll'. "It's a great album," Ringo says, "but I'm prejudiced with John anyway, because I like most things he's done. The only thing I didn't like was 'Some Time In New York City'."



### HORSING AROUND

Seven months before the release of her seminal album 'Horses', Patti Smith meets NME's Lisa Robinson for a wide-ranging chat that covers poetry, body image, The Rolling Stones and Smith's aspirations for the future. "I want to be somebody," Smith says. "I don't mean just somebody 'cos all the kids in my high school know who I am. That was what it was when I was younger. Now, I would really like to be my own best her."

### DOUBLE TAKE

"Can rock lead to schizophrenia?" asks NME's Andrew Weiner, suggesting there's a "preoccupation with fear and confusion and neurosis" in the music of the time. He points to Lou Reed's recent fourth solo album 'Sally Can't Dance', with its "songs about psychiatrics and electric-shock treatment and ennui", and senses neurotic disorders in Bob Dylan's 'Blood On The Tracks'. "What Dylan is connecting with here is a kind of mass neurosis: a pervasive, infinitely nostalgic sense of loss," Weiner writes.

### REVIEWED THIS WEEK



**James Brown - 'Reality'**

"On his last, double album 'Hell', he hit on something really exciting in 'Papa Don't Take No Mess', his best recording in ages. On 'Reality', we get – good God – 'The Twist'." ■ BOB FISHER

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► Barry White gets a surprise cover line announcing a run of UK gigs, including two at London's Royal Albert Hall.  
► Nick Kent reports from the final night of a Faces residency in LA, which attracted a star-studded audience including Bobby Womack, Mick Jagger, Cher and Gregg Allman.  
► There's much confusion about Tangerine Dream and their synthesizers. Do they play them, or do the instruments play the band? And more importantly, can you dance to their music?

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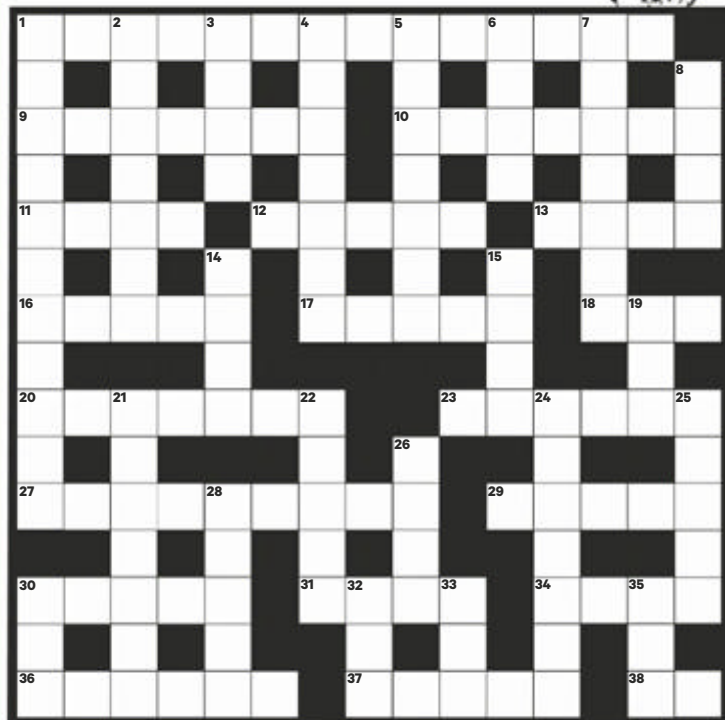


# CROSSWORD

Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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## CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Blur make a single, then go on the road (8-6)
- 9 Tried to arrange a place for Gaz Coombes (7)
- 10 Revealing sex from Peace (2-1-4)
- 11+14D Pulled Apart By Horses? It's a long story and probably not true anyway (4-4)
- 12+25D I'd a smaller version of album by Mercury Rev (3-2-5)
- 13 Catchy part of a song from New Order? (4)
- 16+5D Yup, I see gig CD remix of Julian Cope performance (5-7)
- 17 She was born \_\_\_\_\_ Laurie Blue Adkins in 1988 (5)
- 18 (See 30 across)
- 20 The Walker Brothers hoped she would be held dear on their first hit single (4-3)
- 23 (See 6 down)
- 27 "No tears goodbye, don't want you back, we'd only cry again, say goodbye again", Tom Rush (2-7)
- 29 Group who used Ian Brown for vocals on 1999

- single 'Be There' (5)
- 30+18A There's no colour satellite TV available for this brand new Paul Weller song (5-3)
- 31 She ensures that 'Sea Creatures' get wet (4)
- 36+34A Space for a wander around with The Waterboys (4-2-4)
- 37 Both Ritchie Valens and 10CC knew this girl (5)
- 38 (See 28 down)

## CLUES DOWN

- 1 Band who, facing a potential lawsuit, played for one night in Copenhagen as The Nobs (3-8)
- 2 "Red means run, son, numbers add up to \_\_\_\_\_", from Neil Young's 'Powderfinger' (7)
- 3 Charlatans performance coming from a redeveloped Soho (2-2)
- 4 Laid mat in wrong place for Alt-J (7)
- 5 (See 16 across)
- 6+23A "On the corner of Main Street, just tryin' to keep it in line", 2007 (4-2-4)

- 7 Band that came out of 'The Back Room' (7)
- 8 Less likely to include Midge Ure's group before Ultravox (4)
- 14 (See 11 across)
- 15 It's what the 2nd 'S' in CSS stands for (4)
- 19+33D Canadian duo who had '80s hit with 'I Beg Your Pardon' (3-3)
- 21 Mini Mansions with the same problem U2 once had (7)
- 22 Staggered around doing Scottish dances to tapes by much-loved Australian indie band (5)
- 24 Roman goddess of Deftones' music (7)
- 25 (See 12 across)
- 26 Aged rockers who are in continent (4)
- 28+38A An excellent record player for use with a Ting Tings disc (5-1-1)
- 30 Django Django single appears in this crossword (3)
- 32 Medicine Head number featured in Poldark (3)
- 33 (See 19 down)
- 35 In addition to an album by John Martyn (3)

## MARCH 28 ANSWERS

**ACROSS** 1+4A Coming Up For Air, 10 Mo-dettes, 11 Petals, 12 Our Frank, 13 Snow, 15+34A All Mine, 16+20A That kiss, 17+26A Vanilla Fudge, 22 Lynne, 23 Roses, 24 Ace, 25 Tattva, 30 Nails, 32+35A I'm Not Okay, 33 Ken, 36 Green  
**DOWN** 1 Come On Over, 2+3D Modern Nature, 5+27D PM Dawn, 6 Oceans, 7 As Always, 8 Rascals, 9 Seen It All, 13 Sat, 14+14A Was (Not Was), 18 Nas, 19 Listen, 20 Kettling, 21 Soca, 24 Avenue, 26 Farm, 28 Lick, 29 Stan, 31 Sky

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at [NME.COM/terms](http://NME.COM/terms). Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, April 21, 2015, to: Crossword, NME, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

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## ONLINE FILM

### Mr Happy



As well as being one of the rap world's

brightest young stars, Chance is turning his hand to acting too. Catch him in this short film, where he plays a depressed man who enlists the help of an online service to end his life for him.

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### Jerry Seinfeld & Wale



Wale's 'The Matrimony' single features

a discussion about marriage between the rapper and comedian Jerry Seinfeld. Now you can watch their chat in full, with this video showing Seinfeld opening up to Wale about the ups and downs of getting hitched.

► WATCH [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

## VINYL

### East India Youth - 'Culture Of Volume'



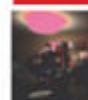
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## APP

### Unknown Mortal Orchestra



The Kiwi-American band are set to release their third album

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► DOWNLOAD [multi-love.com](http://multi-love.com)



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**ALSO  
IN NEXT  
WEEK'S  
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Super Furry  
Animals

Speedy Ortiz

Tim Burgess

## ALBUM REVIEWS

Blur

Brian Jonestown  
Massacre

Earl Sweatshirt

Alabama Shakes

Raekwon

## CAUGHT LIVE

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